PLYMOUTH-BRETHRENISM

BY

REV. THOMAS CROSKERY.

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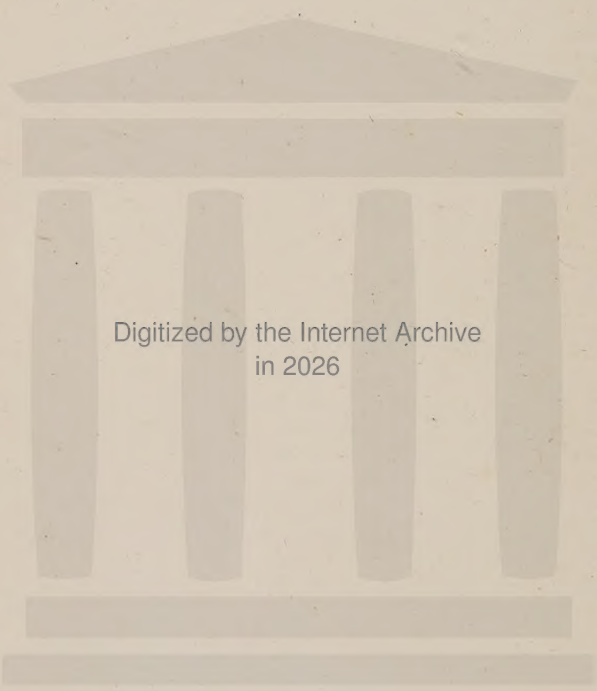
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PLYMOUTH-BRETHRENISM:

A Refutation

OF ITS

PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES.

BY

REV. THOMAS CROSKERY,

LONDONDERRY.

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PREFACE.

THIS small work is intended as a refutation of the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren.

The year eighteen hundred and thirty was the distinct starting-point of three influential developments of religious opinion in these kingdoms. It was then that Newman, Pusey, and Keble were preparing that great Anglo-Catholic reaction in the heart of English Protestantism of which we now feel the disturbing effects in the modern Ritualistic movement and in the revived energy of English Romanism. About the same period the Broad Church movement was slowly though obscurely taking shape. But, almost unnoticed by the world, there sprang up by their side, simultaneously in England and Ireland, a pre-eminently spiritual movement, based on the rejection of all ecclesiastical forms and denominational distinctions, which has become known to history by the name of Plymouth Brethrenism. It is curious to mark, at the end of fifty years, a certain similarity of debasement in the historical development of the three systems. The one movement rapidly culminated in wide-spread secessions to Romanism; the other ripened more slowly into the Rationalism of "Essays and Reviews"; and the third, which offered itself as a refuge to Christians amidst the formalism and decay of the churches, has developed in our day into a system of the sternest ecclesiasticism, known by the name of Darbyism.

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The founder of Plymouth Brethrenism was an English gentleman, named Mr. A. N. Groves, who found himself in 1829 pursuing his studies in Trinity College, Dublin, with a view to the Christian ministry. It was while he was associated there with devout members of the Established Church, in a meeting for religious fellowship, that the idea struck him that "believers, meeting together as disciples of Christ, were free to break bread together, as their Lord had admonished them; and that, in so far as the apostles served as a guide, every Lord's day should be set apart for thus remembering the Lord's death and obeying His parting command." This memorable suggestion seems to have laid the foundations of Brethrenism. A society was at once established in Dublin, including in its membership such men of mark as Groves, Bellett, Cronin, and Darby—the last up till that time serving as a curate in the Established Church of Ireland. In 1831 a society was formed at Plymouth, including Mr. Benjamin W. Newton, Mr. Tregelles, Mr. Soltau, and others; while in the following year Mr. George Müller and Mr. Craik established a similar society in Bristol. The principle of communion in all these societies was the possession of the common life—"the blood of the Lamb the union of saints"—with a sort of corollary that "disciples should bear as Christ does with many errors of their brethren." There was no idea then of a mission to protest against ecclesiastical evil by separation from the churches; for many of the original members were clergymen and laymen still connected with the Church of England. It was far from the intention of any of the leaders at that time to form a new sect. The early meetings were, in fact, not so much established in rivalry of the churches as for the ends of supplementary edification. Six years, however, had not elapsed before the catholic basis of the system was changed. Mr. Darby was the first to broach the theory that the saints

were bound to come out of all the existing churches, on account of their false constitution and the practical evils associated therewith, and to stand upon what he called "the divine ground of the one body." It is easy to attack existing systems, and objections are proverbially far more operative than answers. The new principle had an almost immediate success, and Darbyism became henceforth the strongest development of Brethrenism. But from that hour Brethrenism as such went to pieces. The system which was to be a standing protest against the disunion of believers, scattered through all the sects, was itself rent in twain in 1845, when Mr. Darby withdrew from the Plymouth society and excommunicated all who declined to follow him in his divisive courses. Plymouth Brethrenism has ever since been in crisis. The year 1866 saw the staunchest followers of Mr. Darby—Mr. W. H. Dorman and Captain Percy Hall and others—seceding from his ranks on account of his heresies on the subject of our Lord's sufferings on the cross and His unatoning death. Thus, a system which began with universal fellowship has ended with universal excommunication.

The attitude of the Brethren towards every branch of the Church of Christ—and especially their fixed policy of "gathering churches out of churches"—has long worn an aspect too aggressive to admit of any further connivance or encouragement on the part of Christian people.

It is a curious illustration of the periodicity of religious opinions—marking, at the same time, the necessary limitations of error—that so many of the peculiar doctrines of the Brethren should have already had a place in ecclesiastical history. Plymouthism is, indeed, theologically, the least original of systems. Consciously or unconsciously, the Brethren have been borrowing from all sides. We find their doctrine of the Church in the views of the Donatists; their idea of "the assembly of God meeting round the

Person of Christ on the basis of Matthew xviii. 20," in the writings of John Walker, the founder of the Walkerites; their ideas of ministry, moral law, repentance, and sanctification, in the writings of the Commonwealth sectaries; their idea of faith in Sandeman; their idea of justification in the risen Christ in Edward Irving and John Henry Newman; their idea of Christ's obedience as *not* vicarious in the writings of Piscator, Wendelinus, and John Goodwin; their idea of Christ being Sin-bearer *only* on the cross in the writings of John Forbes, a divine of the seventeenth century; their idea of the non-atoning character of a portion of Christ's sufferings on the cross in an obscure writer referred to by Witzius in his *Economy of the Covenants;* their idea of the heavenly humanity of Christ in the views of the Monophysites; and their idea of the secret rapture of the saints in Pierre Lambert, a Jesuit Father. But we are not to suppose that because it has borrowed so largely, Plymouthism is therefore without system or coherence. In point of fact, there is a certain dependence of its false assumptions upon one another which we should hardly have expected from its eclectic origin, while its dispensational theories have had the effect of colouring the whole system.

I think it necessary to state that the two sects of Brethrenism—the Darbyites or Exclusives, and the "Open" or "Loose Brethren"—think almost alike on *nearly* all the doctrines I have discussed in this small work. Yet the "Open Brethren" are strongly opposed to Mr. Darby's later heresies on the third-class sufferings and the unatoning death of Christ, as well as to his doctrine of the infallibility of the assembly when meeting under the presidency of the Holy Ghost. Yet they hold Darbyite ideas of gifts and ministry. It is not possible to speak so definitely concerning their opinions as concerning those of the Darbyites, for they have no leader and no organization, simply consisting of so many independent "gatherings."

It is a mistake to represent Mr. Benjamin W. Newton as the leader of any section of the Brethren. In point of fact, he left them so far back as 1845, and has ever since laboured as the minister of a congregation at Bayswater; while he is known as the author of a number of exceedingly learned and able treatises against the Brethren, as well as against Ritualism and Rationalism. It is the consistent and fearless attitude he has maintained toward error of all kinds which has exposed him for thirty years to ceaseless persecution from the Darbyites. He is one of the ablest representatives in our day of the sound theology of the Reformation.

In conclusion, I deem it right to state that I attribute to the Brethren no doctrines they do not hold, that I give ample quotations from their works, fairly representing all their opinions, and that I confine myself strictly to the business of refuting their arguments from Scripture.

I have followed Hodge, the American divine, closely, almost verbally, in my treatment of the true doctrine of the Church and its unity.

I trust I have not transgressed the rules of candour or right feeling in the conduct of this discussion.

I have no object in view but the establishment of truth, the salvation of souls, and the glory of God.

March 20th, 1878.

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PLYMOUTH BRETHRENISM.

BOOK I.—THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH IN EXISTENCE BEFORE PENTECOST.

THE Brethren teach that the Church did not exist before Pentecost; that there never was a Jewish Church; that the Old Testament saints, though saved by the blood of Christ, were not members of His body, and therefore were not in the Church; and that the Church consists only of those saints who exist between Pentecost and the Millennium. They hold likewise that the Church has a peculiar glory in heaven which does not belong either to the saints of the Old Testament dispensation or of the Millennium itself. They thus deny the unity of the redeemed in glory.*

* "The Church, then, being Christ's body, could not exist before the Head was in heaven, as Ephesians i. teaches clearly, nor the habitation of God through the Spirit, when the Spirit was not sent. But the doctrine of the Church's being now only set up or revealed, is positively taught in Scripture."—J. N. Darby, *Is the Comforter come?* p. 17.

"It may be necessary to notice, for some, that the Church had no actual existence before the day of Pentecost. When Jesus told Peter about the Church, He did not say, On this rock *I am building*, but 'On this rock *I will build* my Church.' Now that Peter afterwards understood this to refer to resurrection is very clear. (Acts iv. 10—12; 1 Peter i. 34, ii. 4—9.) Surely, as living stones, we are not built on a dead Christ, but built up in Him who is alive from the dead."—C. Stanley, *What was the Sabbath?* p. 22.

"I hope you have seen, then, that the Church is a perfectly new thing—in fact, so new that the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that before union with the Head—and therefore with the members—could be effected, Christ had to die and be raised from the dead, and *with* Him we are raised up and made to *sit together* in heavenly places in Him. Before there could be a body the Head must be raised up to sit

Let us carefully examine the evidence adduced in support of these views.

I. *The Brethren assert that the Church had no existence before Pentecost, because it is expressly called "the mystery hid for generations," which the apostle Paul was specially commissioned to reveal.* They wholly misunderstand the nature of this mystery. The mystery referred to in Ephesians iii. 9—"which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God"—is not the Church, for the passage itself says otherwise: "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the Church* the manifold wisdom of God." It is thus the Church itself which fully reveals that mystery, "which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. iii. 5)—that mystery which was, not that the Old Testament saints were to be shut out of the one body, or that the Gentiles were to enjoy the Messiah's blessings by becoming Jews, but that we, of this dispensation, were to be incorporated into the "one commonwealth" (ii. 12), from which we were alienated, into the "one body" (ver. 16), the "one household," the "one building fitly framed together." The mystery was the admission of Gentiles to share *on equal terms* with the Jews all the blessings purchased by Christ. This was the "mystery" for which the apostle says he was in bonds (Col. iv. 3). The Jews were angry because God had favoured the Gentiles, and accordingly persecuted the great apostle. It was not for "the Church" he was in bonds, but for this "mystery." The Gentiles were to be made "fellow-citizens" of the saints—that is, of the heavenly city, which Abraham looked for, a city with foundations, called the Bride of the Lamb (Rev. xxi. 9, 10). Mr. Darby says the bringing-in of the Gentiles was not an unrevealed mystery, for it is referred to in many Old Testa-

at God's right hand."—Davis, *A Scriptural Inquiry as to what is the Church*, p. 12.

The Church "is the actual living unity with Christ and with each other of those who, since Christ's resurrection, are formed into this unity by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. Was there anything like this in Old Testament times?"—*Plain Papers*, p. 83.

ment scriptures; and he maintains that the mystery spoken of by Paul in Romans xvi. 25—"which was kept secret since the world began"—was an entirely new and different thing. But this very passage shows that it was a mystery which the prophets had already dealt with: "But is now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets made known." * But though the prophets foretold that the Gentiles were to be blessed in Abraham, it was not made known to them *in what manner* the blessing was to be realized. This was the special revelation to which the apostle alludes when he speaks of the dispensation committed to himself as the apostle of the Gentiles.

II. *The Brethren urge that while the Old Testament saints were saved by the blood of Christ, they could not be members of Christ's body, because they had not received that baptism of the Spirit which alone unites to Christ:* "for in one Spirit were we all, whether Jews or Gentiles, baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). The Old Testament saints had life; but life, they say, is not union, though it is necessary to it. Life comes by faith; union comes only by the baptism of the Spirit, for it is said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The Old Testament saints had life, but they had not union with Christ, and therefore were not members of the body of Christ, the Church.†

* The Brethren translate it, "prophetic writings"—the writings in question being those not of the Old Testament, but of the New Testament, according to Ephesians iii. 5, "As it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." The Brethren say the Old Testament prophets revealed nothing concerning the Church. We ask, where are the *writings* of the New Testament prophets? They must have been written before the Epistle to the Ephesians if they are referred to in it. Paul's writings are expository rather than prophetic, according to his usual mode of preaching—"saying none other things than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come" (Acts xxvi. 22). It was by means of Old Testament prophecies expounded by himself that the apostle fulfilled his mission to the Gentiles. The expression γραφῶν προφετικῶν is like εν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις (Rom. i. 2), *not* "holy scriptures," but "the holy scriptures." The Brethren say the doctrine of the Church was peculiar to Paul as distinct from the other apostles. It was their doctrine, certainly, as well as his, for the mystery was "revealed unto *His holy apostles*" (Eph. iii. 5).

† "The giving of life is no proof of union at all. Possession of life is not union. My children receive life from me: they are not my bride.

The question, then, is, were the Old Testament saints united to Christ or not? We hold that it is faith that unites to Christ, and that as they had faith, they were members of His body, the Church.

1. The text adduced by the Brethren proves nothing to the purpose—"He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 16, 17). It says nothing about the *means* of this junction; it only speaks of its *effects*. It does not say that the Spirit joins us at all. The context shows that it refers to the vital union between the soul and the Saviour, and it is by faith we live—"The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). Faith unites to the *object* of faith. If we are born of the Spirit, we are yet said to be "children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus." We are in the last Adam as a "quickening spirit," and faith is the first effect of His quickening. We were "buried with Him in baptism, in which also we were raised together by faith" (Col. ii. 12). Here is union with Christ by faith. Mr. Patterson says that "the Spirit is the unity of the one body." We answer: The body being one is its own unity, and the essence of that unity is "in Christ." The Spirit dwells in the body, but He is not its unity.

2. The Brethren say we are not in the Body till "we are baptized into it by one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). But the Old Testament saints had not this baptism; therefore they are not in the Body.

(*a*) We must remember, however, that the Church is what it is by virtue of Christ's work, not the Spirit's; for He "purchased it with His own blood." *It is Christ, not the Spirit, who "hath made both one"* (Eph. ii. 14). The unity of the body is in Himself, not in the Spirit—"So we, being many, are one body *in Christ*" (Rom. xii. 5). Our title in the Church, therefore, is not the Spirit's baptism, but Christ's blood, of which that baptism was only an effect.* Christ

I repeat, the communication of life by, or the possession of life from Christ, is never union. It may be necessary *to* it. Both may come in an instant, but life and faith must be there, for us to be sealed with the Holy Ghost, by which we are united."—Mr. Darby, *Is the Comforter come? And is He gone?*

* Mr. B. W. Newton well says: "Our title to say 'we are fellow-

gives the title: the Spirit gives the ability to act in the power of it. The gift of the Spirit does not effect redemption, but is itself a purchased result of it. He is "the unction from the Holy One" to apply Christ's blessings. Again, it is Christ, not the Spirit, who builds the Church: "On this rock will *I* build my Church." He is the tried stone. Mr. Patterson speaks of "the body as constituted by the presence of the Holy Ghost." This is hardly a scriptural mode of expression. The New Testament speaks of His "indwelling," not of His "presence." The word "constitute" applies strictly to Christ's work, not the Spirit's. The Church is Christ's "purchased possession" and "God's workmanship," and the Spirit cannot be said properly to "constitute" that of which He is only seal and witness.

(*b*) What, then, does the baptism of the Spirit mean? Whatever it means, it must not be forgotten that the Old Testament saints received the Holy Ghost as well as we ("we having the same spirit of faith" even as the Old Testament saints—2 Cor. iv. 13), though He was given to them in a different manner, as "a Spirit of servantship" (δουλείας), and to us as a "Spirit of sonship" (υἱοθεσιας). "But He did not dwell in the Old Testament saints." Did He not? "Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him?" (Isa. lxiii. 11; also Ps. li. 10, 11, 12.)

What, then, is the Spirit's baptism in which the Old Testament saints had no share? The Brethren represent it as distinct from faith, because the question is asked, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" (Acts xix. 2). It was, therefore, distinct from regeneration, else no Old Testament saint was regenerated. The passage is not,

citizens of the saints and of the household of God' rests, according to this system, not on Christ the Saviour, but on the Spirit as given at Pentecost. Experiences wrought in us through the Spirit, not faith in Jesus, become the link that unites us to the hope of appointed glory. If this be so, we need to alter those blessed words which say, 'The Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood;' we should be obliged to say, 'The Church of God, which He hath made His Church because of that which it learns and knows through the Spirit.'" He also truly says, "Heaven is not made a transcript of the dispensational differences of earth."—*Old Testament Saints not excluded from the Church of God.*

they say, "By one Spirit were we all *regenerated* into one body."

We observe, in reply, that the New Testament speaks of baptism under two aspects—one having relation to salvation, the other, to gifts. The first is presented in Romans vi. 3—"Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death?" Spiritual birth is implied in this baptism. The second is baptism mainly for supernatural gifts, sometimes going before water-baptism (Acts x. 46), oftener following it (Acts viii. 12—17), and was always conferred either by the laying-on of apostles' hands or by illapse of the Spirit.* This baptism is referred to in Matthew iii. 11, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" and Jesus Himself says (Acts i. 4, 5), "wait for the promise of the Father which ye heard of me, for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence,"—in allusion to Pentecost, when the Spirit descended in tongues and prophecy on those already regenerate. Again, Peter preaches to Cornelius and his friends, and "the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word. . . . They heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts x. 44—46). "But Scripture does not call this the baptism of the Spirit." It expressly does; for Peter, referring to this very scene, says, "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning: then remembered I the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost'" (Acts xi. 15, 16). Again, the Samaritans believed and were baptized by Philip. Peter and John afterwards prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost,† and then "laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 17).

* A correct translation of Hebrews vi. 2 specifies these two baptisms—"baptisms of instruction" (hence catechumens), "and of the laying-on of hands."

† The Brethren say it is wrong to pray for the Holy Ghost, yet here is an example of it. (Another example is in Ephesians i. 17.) Why, too, should apostles pray that Christians might have "grace" (Rom. i. 7), when they had it already? This is *apropos* of the objection that it is wrong to pray for the Spirit because He had already come.

Now, both of the aspects of baptism already referred to seem to be presented in 1 Corinthians xii. 13—a chapter which speaks much of supernatural gifts, such as tongues, prophecies and miracles. The baptism here is quite consistent with the baptism of Romans vi. 3; for those who are "baptized into Christ" are, *ipso facto*, baptized into the one body, of which He is Head, for gifts as well as salvation, for it is Christ emphatically who gave gifts to men (Eph. iv. 8). The baptism for supernatural gifts does not now exist. Mr. Darby virtually says it does. We reply (1) that it was always conferred by apostles' hands or by illapse of the Spirit. (2) It always left behind it supernatural gifts. (3) It was as outward as water-baptism itself, for people had visible proofs of its power. The passage, then, refers to regeneration, and also to the Spirit's baptism for supernatural gifts: "For by (or *in*) one Spirit were we all, whether Jews or Gentiles, baptized into one body." They carried the gifts into the body through the baptism of the Spirit. They had their place there already for spiritual life, because of their union with Christ, but now they carried into the body gifts for its edification.

The Brethren, however, insist that the Spirit's baptism was neither regeneration nor the conferring of supernatural gifts, but sealing, and that this sealing was peculiar to New Testament believers. We reply (1) that it is nowhere called sealing in Scripture, though sealing is often referred to. The passage is not—By one Spirit were we *sealed* into one body. Sealing was not for gifts, but for security, and is one of the effects of our being in one body. (Eph. i. 13, iv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 22.) Besides, it is the Father who seals; it is Christ who baptizes, *in* the Spirit. (2) If this sealing makes believers now members of the body of Christ, may we ask whether the Ephesian disciples of John and the Samaritans were not members of the body even before the apostles laid their hands upon them at all? (3) If the Father's sealing implies the security of believers and their assurance of salvation, the Old Testament saints possessed it as well as ourselves (Psalms, *passim*). Any other sealing is now impossible, from the want of apostles to confer it. (4) If the Spirit's baptism had anything to do with sal-

vation as distinct from gifts, I maintain that, though the Old Testament saints had not the formal baptism of the New Testament saints, they must have had its saving and sanctifying effects. They had not water-baptism, but they had all that it signified, else they could not have been saved. They had not the Lord's Supper, but they enjoyed the blessings and benefits of Christ's death. It is very true that the gift of the Holy Ghost was one of the fruits of Christ's death and intercession; yet the Holy Ghost had been operating ages before, both in His miraculous and in His saving power. It could never have been given except as the fruit of Christ's death. Brethren say—"The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39). We admit this. Had He never been glorified, the Holy Ghost had never been given; yet He had been given ages before in miracle-working and saving power on the ground of this very glorification. But before Pentecost, men did not know that it was the peculiar office of the Spirit to confer these gifts and graces. It is quite a mistake of the Brethren to represent the Spirit's work as different before and after Christ. The difference was quantitative, not qualitative.

3. The doctrine of the fifth of Romans is union with Adam and union with Christ. Sin and death by the one: life and righteousness by the other. The same doctrine is in 1 Corinthians xv. 20, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be quickened." The word *in* marks union with Christ as federal Head. "We have borne the image of the earthy: we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." What blessing is there higher than being raised in the likeness of Christ? Shall not *all* saints bear this likeness? There is no redemption apart from union with the Person of the Redeemer. This redemption belonged to Old Testament saints. Now, in Ephesians i. 21—23, where the Church is called "the fulness of Christ," the reference is to Him as the last Adam, as we see by verse 22 being a quotation from Psalm viii. Old Testament saints, therefore, being in the last Adam, belong to the πλήρωμα of Christ, the Church.

4. Abraham and David are, in Romans iv., said to be

justified exactly as we are. Therefore they had union with Christ, because, if justified, they "died with Him." If they did not die with Him, they are lost.* If they died with Him, they rose with Him, and He is expressly called "the first-fruits of them"—the Old Testament saints—"that have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20). And if they rose in Him, it was as their Head and Representative. The privileges of the justified are declared to be "expectation of the glory of God"; "reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ"—as the result of being IN Him, as the second Man, the last Adam —"being conformed to the image of God's Son." Does not Paul say that these privileges all belong to Abraham and David? He says, if we have Christ, we have all things (1 Cor. iii. 21—23). How, then, shall not the Old Testament saints, who had Christ, have "all things" likewise—all the glory that belongs to the Church, "the Jerusalem which is above," the "mother of us all"?

5. If we are Abraham's seed, we must have union with Christ: "They that are of faith are blessed *with* [*not* apart from] faithful Abraham." (Gal. iii.) The apostle shows here that Abraham has the heirship, the kingdom, the sonship, the glory, on the ground of the promise, and that we thus enter into his privileges—"If sons, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). What glory of the Church is not comprehended in the blessings of this joint-heirship? Are they heirs without an inheritance? Did Abraham receive the promises only for his children? Mr. B. W. Newton says, after quoting Galatians iii. 14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,"—"Here we are expressly taught that we receive 'the promise of the Spirit' as now given,

* It is said in Colossians ii. 11, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ"—that is, by a circumcision received by means of Christ. Circumcision, therefore, as God's pledge to Abraham, involves union with Christ in His death. Unless we say that Abraham was not circumcised anti-typically—that is, in heart—we must admit he was in Christ as the Head of the Church. All the anti-typically circumcised are by this passage declared to be *in* Him who is called the "Head of the body, the Church."

because we share Abraham's blessing. Take the promise of the Spirit from Abraham, and we take it from ourselves. The promise of the Spirit is not a temporary dispensational promise merely. The Spirit will be the power of our new life in glory." (*Thoughts on Isaiah*, vol. i., p. 164.) Is he himself, the father of the family, to be excluded, especially when we know that "many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven"? Not a hint here of a different and inferior glory for Old Testament saints!

6. But there is the clearest evidence that the saints of all dispensations will share in the same glory: "These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 40). Mark, it is not "that we, without them, should not be made perfect." The Brethren actually quote this text on their side. But it does not teach that God has provided something better for us than for them hereafter—for that would contradict χωρὶς, *apart from*—but it teaches that He had provided a better thing for us than to allow that they should be perfected apart from us. If the saints of the two dispensations have a different calling and glory, then they are perfected apart from each other. God has provided some better thing: better, that is, than they had known on earth: we have a better portion than our fathers *now*, but not in the final glory.

7. The Brethren admit that the city (Rev. xxi. 2) is the Bride, the Lamb's wife; yet Paul represents the Old Testament saints as inheritors of the glory of this very city (Heb. xi. 16). If they are not in the city they are lost: "God will take his part out of the holy city." If Abraham belongs to the city, the Bride, how can he be without the blessings that pertain to the city? The city is "a symbol of corporate condition representing the glory of the Church as a whole." Remember that the gates of the city bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

III. *The Brethren affirm that Christ could not be the Head of the Old Testament saints, because He was not Head till He had risen from the dead.* We reply:—

1. Christ was not, and could not be, a Saviour without dying, yet He was the Saviour of Old Testament saints ages before His death. Now, He was Head just as He was Saviour, for "He is the Head of the Church and He is the Saviour of the body" (Eph. v. 23). He was the federal Head of all believers, because as the last Adam all believers are in Him. He was Head as He was Surety. The argument of Romans v. 12—18 here exactly applies. Christ is said to be "the Head of every man," as "the head of woman is the man" (1 Cor. xi. 3). If He is only the Head of every *Christian* man, then man was not the head of woman in the Jewish dispensation.

2. If Christ only became Head when He rose from the dead, and if the body, the Church, only came into being at Pentecost, then for forty days there was a Head without a body! Is this credible?

3. There are just seven passages which speak of Christ as Head (Eph. i. 22, iv. 15, v. 23; Col. i. 18, ii. 10, 19; 1 Cor. xi. 3). But not one of them asserts that He *became* Head through resurrection. The resurrection declared the headship as it declared His sonship, for He was Head as He was Son of God before He came into the world at all. Ephesians i. 22, on which the Brethren rely, does not refer to His headship of the Church at all, but to His mediatorial headship over all things: "He gave Him as Head over all things to the Church."

4. If Christ was not Head, how could He be Mediator for Old Testament saints? Was He Mediator for them at all, exercising His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King? If He was not, they are lost. But from Abel downward they were pardoned, enlightened, sanctified—which they could not be unless by the Mediator in the exercise of all His offices. He was Priest from the beginning, for He forgave sin. His death was essentially necessary to the discharge of His functions as a King, for Philippians ii. 10 says, "Wherefore [because of His death] God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." The possession of this dominion was necessary to His mediatorship. Was it as necessary before His coming as after it?

If He saved men from the beginning, He was King from the beginning. This seems opposed to the statement that the dominion conferred upon Him was the reward of His obedience unto death, but there is no contradiction in the case. There never was a Saviour but Christ, and He never saved but by atonement. Yet the Old Testament saints were washed from their sins in His blood ages before His blood was shed. If they were saved without His mediation, then His mediation was then and is now unnecessary. So the dominion of the Mediator was conferred upon Him in consequence of His obedience unto death, and was yet enjoyed and exercised by Him long before His death. The exaltation He received after death was not an accession of new glory or power, but the manifestation of a glory He had from the beginning.

In point of fact, the Brethren have adopted an altogether carnalized view of the relation between Christ and His members, as if this relation were corporeal and not spiritual. They do so on the strength of a false reading in Ephesians v. 30: "For ye are members of His body, *of His flesh, and of His bones.*" The italicized words are not in the three oldest MSS., and are condemned as spurious by all the best critical editors.

IV. *The Brethren say that the saints are not called the Church in the Old Testament.*

1. It would not follow that because they are not called so, they are not the Church. We might as well say that there was no "new man" in Old Testament times because there is no hint of it in the Old Testament. The Brethren argue as if the Church could not be the Church till the Gentiles were included in it. But they forget that there was not a Gentile in the Church till Cornelius was called; and yet, while it was still composed only of Jews, it is called the Church. (Acts ii. 47, v. 11.) But what right have the Brethren to say that the Old Testament saints are not expressly included in that "Church of the Lord" (true reading) which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28*)—in that Church which "Christ loved and

* The ἐκκλησία Κυρίου of this passage curiously corresponds with the ἐκκλησία Κυρίου of Deuteronomy xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 8.

gave Himself for"? Did He only love and give Himself for New Testament saints?

2. The word ἐκκλησία was borrowed from the Old Testament. Stephen refers to "the Church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38). The Brethren are indignant at the perverseness of interpreters applying this term to the Church in its New Testament sense. They say it means "the congregation in the wilderness." Why do they not say at once, as they usually translate the phrase, "the assembly in the wilderness"? It means, however, the whole body of the Jewish people religiously regarded; just as Mr. Kelly admits that "the Church in Judea" means the whole body of professing Christians in Judea—*i.e.*, more than one ἐκκλησία. (1) We remark that when Stephen used the word ἐκκλησία, he was familiar with its New Testament signification, for, according to Brethren, the Church was in being before his martyrdom. (2) The Hebrew word *kahal*, translated ἐκκλησία in the Septuagint, means, say the Brethren, the congregation of Israel met for worship, and not one body, the Church. We maintain, however, that, like ἐκκλησία in the New Testament, it had several significations. (*a*) It meant all the male adults of Israel (Josh. viii. 35). (*b*) It meant the people assembled for worship: Joel ii. 16, "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation"; Psalm cxlix. 1, "Sing His praise in the Church of saints"; Psalm lxxxix. 5, "Thy faithfulness also in the Church of saints." These words correspond to the Corinthian Church met for worship. (*c*) It meant all the generations of Israel through ages regarded as one body: Deut. v. 22, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount. . . . And it came to pass when ye heard the voice . . . that ye came near, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders." These words refer not to the Israel of one generation, but of many ages. It does not mean the people assembled for worship, for they were the congregation (*kahal*) when they were not worshipping at all, just as ἐκκλησία in the New Testament signifies the Church of a place, whether met for worship or not. (3) "But the congregation included saints and sinners, and could not, therefore, be the Church." It is true the congregation is called Israel, and that Paul says expressly, the external

Israel is not the true Israel. He makes a clear distinction between "Israel after the spirit" and "Israel after the flesh"—between "a Jew inwardly and a Jew outwardly" (1 Cor. x. 18; Rom. ii. 28, 29; ix. 6—"They are not all Israel who are of Israel"—that is, "Israel does not consist of unbelievers"). Likewise, the Old Testament distinguishes the saints from the mass of the people: "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart;" "Thy saints shall bless Thee" (Psalms lxxiii. 1, cxlv. 10). The terms "congregation of the righteous," "congregation or Church of the saints," and "the assembly of the upright," do not describe the mass of the people (Psalms l. 5, lxxxix. 5, cxi. 1). They were "a remnant according to the election of grace." "But," say the Brethren, "if that be the case, the Israelites could not be one body." We say, Israel, after Paul's interpretation, was one body, as the Corinthian Church was one body, though *it* included in its external communion heretics, errorists, and transgressors. Besides, the body of Christ does not consist of churches, but of individual saints. "But the Church which Christ purchased with His own blood consists only of saints." We admit it: the saints of both dispensations. The Church at Corinth was the body of Christ there: not that all whom Paul so addressed were true believers, but were addressed according to their profession. The Church in the wilderness was the Church in the same sense: it consisted of believers and unbelievers as to external communion; but all are spoken of under the same name, because all included in the same external communion. Yet the true and proper idea of the Church is the body of saints, as the true and proper idea of Israel is "Israel after the spirit," not "Israel after the flesh."

3. "But," say the Brethren, "Israel was typical of the Church, and therefore could not be the Church itself." I admit there was a typical character attached to the Israelites, but that did not abolish their real character. Paul says their very sins and punishments were types to us (1 Cor. x. 11), but they were, notwithstanding, real sins and real punishments. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbolical, but they are real as well. The Old Testament Church was a real visible Church, not a mere figure or shadow of

the New Testament Church, as we know by its privileges. Its members are called His people and His inheritance: a relation founded not in the Sinaitic, but in the Abrahamic covenant, which is that under which we of the New Testament dispensation stand (Gal. iii. 14), just as we are called "God's heritage" (1 Peter v. 3). Is the Church the Bride, the Lamb's wife? The Old Testament Church is married to the Lord, and called the mother of children. (Isa. liv.; Ezek. xvi.; Hos. ii.) Are New Testament believers the Church of saints? The Israelites are the "Church of saints" (Ps. lxxxix. 3). "They were so only typically." The typical does not abolish their real character. They were saints in Christ Jesus, just as they were at Corinth; and if some Israelites belied their professions of saintship, it was no more than happened at Corinth, where the apostle who addresses the members as "saints in Christ Jesus" has to charge some of them with ignorance and heresy, and has to institute a comparison between them and Israel in the wilderness as regards murmuring, lusting, fornication, idolatry (1 Cor. x.). Yet they were in the membership of the Corinthian Church, regarded and treated according to their profession, just as the Israelites were.

V. "*But the Church only came into existence at Pentecost; for Christ said to Peter, 'On this rock I* WILL *build my Church,' implying that it was yet to be built.*" But He does not say, "On this rock I will *found* my Church," but "I will build it." It is οἰκοδομήσω, not θεμελιώσω. It was founded ages before. Our Lord asserts nothing but the continuance of a work in progress for ages, only under impliedly new conditions, as it was to include Gentiles as well as Jews within its new constitution. In fact, our Lord takes for granted, in the very expression "my Church," its present existence. Winer shows how the future tense in the Greek Scriptures often denotes a course of action already in progress,—"I will go on building." "The future," says Winer, "in expressing general truths, sometimes very nearly assumes the import of the present;" and he gives examples of the usage. "But the foundation was never actually laid till Pentecost, for Paul says, 'Ye are built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-

stone.'" (1) This does not prove that Christ was not always the foundation. The apostles and prophets were not founders, but builders, who, in their ministry, laid Christ as the foundation: "other foundation can no man lay." No matter where they preached, they always laid this foundation anew (1 Cor. iii.). Each individual Church had Christ for its foundation. We are told that God hath laid in Zion "a chief corner-stone, elect, precious." And then it is added, "To you that believe"—not to you only of the New Testament dispensation—"that preciousness belongs" (1 Peter ii. 6); so that God laid that stone in Zion for every Old Testament saint, else every Old Testament saint is lost. Christ was always the foundation, else there could have been no salvation before the coming of Christ.

We believe, then, that no new Church was set up at Pentecost. The child grows to be a man, and is emancipated from tutors and governors, but he is still the same being, though promoted to higher dignity. The new dispensation was, as Isaiah shows, to be but a continuation or development of the economy in being. Zion was to be enlarged, so as to admit all the nations of the earth (Isa. xlix. 14—20, liv. 1—3), and ultimately to realize the glory of the "one family in heaven and in earth," to which the saints of all dispensations belong, rejoicing in the same Saviour, and destined to share in the same eternal glory.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH CONSISTS OF BELIEVERS, LIVING AND DEAD

THE Brethren hold that the Church consists only of the saints living upon earth at any one time, and not of the saints in glory, who are said to be out of its unity. Mr. Patterson says, "Now this body is in the world, as is the Holy Ghost, whose presence constitutes it. It is *not* in heaven. The Head is in heaven, and the members have a heavenly position by faith, while, in fact, they are in the world." Again: "Now, it is quite true that all the saints between those two great events are of the body of Christ—*of* it in the mind and counsel of God. But those who have died have lost their present actual connection with the body, having passed away from the sphere where, as to personal place, the Holy Ghost is. They have ceased to be *in* its unity."—*One Body and One Spirit*, pp. 15, 17.

There is great confusion and absurdity in this statement.

1. If the saints are *of* the body, how can they be out of its unity, since the body is one? It is a contradiction in terms to say so. The saints all hold their place in the body on earth by a certain kind of life—*life in Christ*. Does this life cease with their mortal breath? Does God set members in the body that they may die out of it again? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Is not the body God's Church? But, again, if the body be on earth, and if it be a true body—that is, with a head—then the Head is on earth and not in heaven. If the saints above are not in the body, then Christ, its Head, cannot be in it for the same reason.

2. If they are not in the body they are not in that Church which Christ "purchased with His own blood," for that Church is the body, and nothing but the body. If they are not in the body, they are without a head, for Jesus is the

Head only of the body. As the members are only "one body in Christ," they are out of Christ if they are out of the body. "The whole body" consists of all saints, living and dead; and because a part represents a whole, Christ's members are, as at Corinth, called "His body," just as a believer's body is called a temple of the Holy Ghost. Can the "whole body" grow to the measure of the stature of a perfect man without including the growth of the entire Church of God? Do not the Brethren themselves admit that the Bride, the Lamb's wife, which is to come down out of heaven, is the one body?

3. How groundless and puerile is the conceit that the Holy Ghost is not in heaven, because He is said to have come down at Pentecost! The argument is that the saints in glory are not in "the body," because the Holy Ghost, which dwells in "the body," is not in heaven, but on earth. Surely a Divine Person cannot be limited to place. Jesus was the "Son of Man" in heaven at the moment He said to Nicodemus, on earth, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which *is* in heaven" (John iii. 13). The Holy Ghost is come into the world, but He is "the seven spirits" which are before the throne of God (Rev. i. 3).

4. But the Brethren insist that the Church consists only of saints on earth, because we read, "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." The dead, they say, do not suffer. We reply (1) This argument will prove too much, for it will prove that Christ is not of the body, yet He is its Head. The saints above do not suffer, because they are in heaven. Jesus, the Head, does not suffer, because He is in heaven. (2) It does not follow that saints in glory are not members, unless it will be maintained that in order to membership the position of the two branches of the family must be exactly the same in all respects. We speak familiarly of the Church militant and the Church triumphant: they are the same Church; but you cannot predicate of the one everything you can predicate of the other.

The Church, then, consists of "the whole family (πᾶσα πατρια) in heaven and in earth," of which Paul speaks in the Ephesian Epistle, which is so full of the glory of the Church.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

THE Brethren hold that the Church consists of believers, and that therefore there is no ground for the distinction, usually made, between the Church invisible and the Church visible. The Church, they say, was always visible. An invisible Church has no existence: "what would be the use of an invisible light?" As the Church consists only of believers, it follows that the so-called churches or denominations of our day are not entitled to the name, because unbelievers are included in their membership.*

I admit that the Church consists only of believers. It is the body of Christ. Unbelievers cannot be members of the body. But yet I maintain that Scripture makes a distinction between two classes of professors in the Church—the true and the false, the sincere and the insincere.

1. How are the churches addressed? "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." This proves that the Church consists only of believers; but it does not prove that in the Corinthian ἐκκλησία all were saints, for the Apostle addresses them *according to their profession.* But

* "In 1 Corinthians it is spoken of as constituted by the Holy Ghost, present and operating in it; there also it is called the body of Christ, as we see from the Scripture just referred to—'By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.' Obviously this is extremely important, because what people think and talk about as the 'invisible Church'—though Scripture never uses the expression—was substantially in existence before 'the Church'; and, in fact, this invisible state of things is what the Lord was putting an end to when He formed the Church."—W. Kelly's *Lectures on the Church*, pp. 81, 82.

"As to any distinction sought to be established between what you term the Church 'visible' and 'invisible,' I have only to say that no such thought occurs in Scripture, which invariably gives us the Head exalted in heaven and 'the body' on earth."—*Inquiry as to Scriptural Position, etc.*, p. 6.

the fact that they are so addressed does not make the Church consist of unbelievers as well as believers. They professed to be believers—otherwise they would not have been received into the Church at all; and this very fact implies that the Church consists of believers. If you hold that men are always what they are addressed as being—say, that all at Corinth were true saints—then your position goes to prove that all the members of the external church (for it is to the external worshipping community at Corinth the apostle writes) are saints and believers—which is contrary to fact. The fact is indisputable that the Church is addressed as the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and yet the Church is commanded to cast out its unholy or impure members. This does not prove that the Church consists of holy persons and of unholy persons, but that those who are *called* saints and are wicked ought to be disowned as saints.

2. The parables of our Lord show the state of the Church in this world under the figure of the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, but there is nothing in these parables to prove that the Church consists of both believers and unbelievers. "Oh!" say the Brethren, "the Church is not the kingdom of heaven at all, for the Church consists only of saints, and the kingdom of heaven of saints and sinners. The wheat and the tares are in the kingdom: the wheat only belongs to the Church." We reply (1) The Church and the kingdom have exactly the same condition of membership. If faith in Christ places us in the Church, it is regeneration that places us in the kingdom: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* The way

* The Brethren are greatly puzzled at this text. One of them says, after quoting it,—"How is this, if a mere profession brings a person into the kingdom? *It is believed* that such passages refer to only God's view of the kingdom. He sowed good seed only, and here he seems to be taking no notice of what the enemy has done." (*The Kingdom of Heaven: what is it?* p. 13.) Yet, will it be believed, a leading Brother speaks of this kingdom, with regeneration for its gate of admission, in the following terms: "The former [the kingdom] may be compared to *a wide morass;* the latter [the Church] to a running stream passing through it, and in constant danger of losing its distinctive character, as well as its proper direction, by intermingling with the surrounding waters." That kingdom, which is righteousness, peace and

into the kingdom is therefore as strait as the way into the Church. The Brethren sometimes make the kingdom synonymous with the professing Church or Christendom, and sometimes with God's providential kingdom, which includes the Church within its dispensations; but they always maintain that nothing but profession is needed for entering the kingdom. Now, it is a curious fact that Scripture does not contain a passage to prove that outward profession or baptism secures admission to the kingdom. The expression "kingdom of God" occurs many times in the Gospels and the Epistles; and always refers to believers, and to believers only. The distinction made by the Brethren between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven is quite gratuitous. They are one and the same: "The kingdom of *heaven* is like unto leaven" (Matt. xiii. 33); "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of *God?* It is like leaven" (Luke xiii. 21). Our Lord expressly identifies the two in Matthew xix. 23, 24. It was of no mere professing Church that Jesus spoke when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It was of the Church of saints. (2) We do not say that the Church and the kingdom are in every sense the same, for some things can be said of the kingdom that cannot be said of the Church, and *vice versâ*, but merely that the kingdom sets forth *the state of the Church in this world;** but it does not therefore follow that *the wicked are in the kingdom any more than they are in the Church.*† How could they get there? The gate of regeneration bars them out. The parables of

joy in the Holy Ghost is, forsooth, "a wide morass"! Yet it is the very inheritance of the "poor in spirit" (Matt. v. 3).

* Daille, who holds the Church to consist only of believers, says: "He does not say that the Church is represented to us in these parables, but only its condition in this world, where we admit that it is very often mixed with hypocrites, dwelling in the same place, on the same floor, in the same temple, making the same profession, but who are not for all that of the Church. The tares are on the same floor with the good grain, but the tares are not for all that the good grain. . . . . We say, therefore, that the floor which is spoken of in the Gospel signifies this present world (*siècle*), where hypocrites and the profane mix themselves with the believers and the Church so closely that none but God can separate them."

† The Brethren will say the tares are in the kingdom of heaven, but not in the Church, for, according to our Lord's interpretation, "the field

the kingdom do not teach us what are the conditions of membership in the kingdom. We must refer to other scriptures for information on that point. The parables are to be interpreted just as we interpret the passages concerning the Church. The Church at Corinth consists of the sanctified in Christ Jesus, yet is commanded to cast out its unholy members. So those who profess to be His kingdom are His kingdom.

3. The distinction of visible and invisible as applied to the Church arises, then, out of the fact that all who profess to be believers are not really such, and that the human mind is not omniscient. The invisible Church is the Church as seen by God; the visible Church the Church as seen by man. They are not two churches, any more than the same castle or palace viewed from different standpoints by two spectators becomes, therefore, two castles or two palaces. When we say the Church is invisible, we do not say that believers are invisible, but that an inward and therefore invisible state of mind is a condition of membership. In its true nature the Church is not a visible society, but the communion of saints. The Church is visible, not as an ecclesiastical organization, but as the living body of Christ. In other words, the Church is visible just as believers are visible. If all who professed to be saints were really so, the distinction of visible and invisible could not arise. But this distinction is manifest in Scripture. (1) It was recognised in Old Testament times between the man who was a Jew outwardly and not a Jew inwardly; between Israel after the flesh and Israel after the Spirit. (2) It is manifest in 2 Timothy ii. 19, "The Lord knoweth them that are His"—implying that man does not. (3) 1 John ii. 19, 20, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." While

is the world"—not the Church. 1. But the kingdom of heaven is not likened to a field, neither is it a part of the field; but it is set down upon a part of the field which is "the world." It did not cover the whole field. 2. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," but our Lord does not say that the tares—"the children of the wicked one"—belong to the kingdom at all. They have, no doubt, occupied a portion of the "field" side by side with "the children of the kingdom;" but they do not belong to it at all. Litton says: "The tares describe the condition, not of the body of Christ, but of every local church."

they were with the Church, John, like Paul, would have addressed them as saints, according to their profession.*

4. But the Brethren themselves admit the very distinction for which we are contending. Mr. Darby says: "There are two points to be considered which comprehend all that with which I am at present occupied. The first is one which I have heretofore noticed, and on which the confusion and discord that agitates believing Protestantism rests —namely, the identifying the house with the body, or the outward thing here on earth (including all who profess Christianity and are baptized) with the inward thing, or that which is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost. The other is taking the figure of a building (as Scripture does) and then confounding what Christ Himself builds with what is the fruit of the work of building externally—here on earth—entrusted to the responsibility of man." (*The Church, the House, and the Body*, p. 1.) Here is the distinction freely admitted. But we must demur to Mr. Darby's interpretation of the "house." All Brethren are careful to say that while the body consists only of saints, the house—the building of God entrusted to man's responsibility—consists of saints and sinners. Now, Scripture says that the Church, which is the very body of Christ, is "the house of God—the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15); that believers are this house—"whose house are we" (Heb. iii. 6), with Christ "a son over his own house," and that they are built up "a spiritual house." The house, then, is no more the professing Church than the Church itself. It is the Church. It is true that the body of Christ becomes such by Divine power, but the house is not built by man any more than the Church; for Christ says, "I will *build* my Church," even though he employs Paul and other apostles in carrying out the work.

The application of the principles established in this chapter will be presently seen.

* I agree with Mr. Litton in his "Doctrine of the Church" that the distinction made by the Reformers was not a very happy one. Yet it is difficult to find a better. When Protestants speak of the invisible Church, he says they mean the mystical body of Christ as distinct from local churches. The members of Christ's body are not to be sought for except in the visible churches of Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

WE now approach by far the most important and critical part of this controversy—the nature of the unity which Scripture ascribes to the one body.

The Brethren hold that they—and they only—are "gathered" simply as members of the one body, without respect to the distinctions which prevail among the sects. Their opinion respecting our churches has no ambiguity about it. They say the churches have no divine unity. The unity of the Anglican Establishment is the unity of creed; the unity of Dissent is a unity of difference, the members of each sect of Dissenters being visibly united, not as possessing the Spirit, but as differing from other sects—not as being saints or disciples or brethren, but on self-devised principles of worldliness, exclusive sectarianism, isolated portions of truth, or in the name of some man. The want of unity is seen in the existence of several churches in one city or town. If God were now to send an epistle to the Church of God in such a place, there would not be one to receive it: it would have to be sent to the dead-letter office. Persons cannot hold membership with two different denominations at the same time, for if they are members with the Independents they cannot be members with the Baptists; and it is therefore clear that to own membership in any of the sects is to own schism in the body. Every existing Church is therefore founded on principles essentially erroneous; and thus it becomes the duty of all Christians to withdraw from all the systems called "Churches," and to join themselves to those who are not gathered as a sect, but gathered simply as the members of one body, without respect to distinctions which prevail among the sects. Union with the sects is therefore "evil," is an "unscriptural independency," and is

to be "self-excluded from the unity of the Spirit;" and "a faithful disciple who finds himself connected with any of these parties ought to separate himself from so carnal a course." The "gatherings" of the Brethren are the "good land," while all without the sacred enclosures are in "the wide dominions of the apostacy." *

It will thus be seen that the claim of the Brethren is an immense one; for though they speak of the Church as in ruins and reprobate the presumption of attempting to restore it, they nevertheless arrogate to themselves, as we shall presently see, the name, titles and functions which belong to the whole Church. We shall endeavour, then, in the first place, to ascertain from Scripture what is the true nature of the Church's unity, and then we shall be the better able to dispose of the somewhat arrogant claims of the Brethren.

1. We read in Scripture of "one body," "one Spirit," "the unity of the Spirit," "the unity of faith," "one faith." We must examine these expressions with care. Wherever the Spirit is, there is union with Christ, and wherever there is union with Christ, there is membership in His body, the Church. The in-dwelling of the Spirit is the bond of unity in the Church. It follows, therefore, that believers must be one in faith, in love, and obedience. But this inner union must have outward expression in the recognition of all Christians as such, and in mutual helpfulness and harmony. But the Church is too widely diffused in a geographical sense to admit of these conditions of mutual

* "The spirit of a sect exists when we see disciples outside this unity, and when it is around an opinion that those who profess it are gathered, in order that they may be united by means of this opinion. This unity is not founded on the principle of the unity of the body, or of the union of brethren. When such persons are united in a corporation, and mutually recognize each other as members of this corporation, then they constitute formally a sect, because the principle of the gathering is not the unity of the body." — *What is a Sect?* p. 5. J. N. D.

"The apostle could say, 'To the Church of God which is at Corinth.' It represented the whole unity of the body in that place. 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' Two bodies of Christ, even in one place, representatively, there could not be."—J. N. D., *Churches and the Church*, p. 7.

care and subjection being realised, and therefore there is a necessity for more restricted organizations. Besides, Christians speaking different languages, even in the same city or town, must worship apart. It is clear, then, that there is nothing in independent organization *as such* inconsistent with the unity of the body, so long as the one faith, the one love and the one obedience are maintained, and all the more as the unity of the body exists independently of our recognition of each other's standing in the body. Now, if the unity of the Church arises from union with Christ and the in-dwelling of the Spirit, those who are united to Him are members of His Church—no matter what their ecclesiastical connexions may be, or whether they have any ecclesiastical connexions at all. If they can exist outside all ecclesiastical relations—and it would be impossible to dispute the fact—then these relations cannot be essential to the one body. Any reason not destructive of the principle of unity may be made the ground of separate organizations—not merely difference of language or geographical distance, but diversity of opinion. The Brethren themselves concede that differences of opinion are possible in the one body within certain limits. When the apostle speaks of "one faith" in Ephesians (Eph. iv. 5, 13), and of "the unity of faith," we are not to suppose that no differences of opinion existed or were allowable within this unity, or that the unity of the body would be violated by differences of opinion on what we would call unessential points. There was "one faith" at Corinth, because there was a church there; yet all its members did not believe alike. There were more differences at Corinth than now divide many evangelical bodies from each other; and if these differences did not destroy "the one faith," neither can ours. They are all perfectly consistent with the unity of the body. It is true that such differences are evidence of imperfection, and therefore separations on the ground of them are evil, but they are a less evil than strife or hypocrisy. All admit that the Church ought to be one, not only in faith and love, but in fellowship and organization; and if the inward unity of believers were perfect, their external union would be complete; but as believers have always been

—even in the days of the apostles—and probably will ever continue to be, imperfect in other respects, the ideal type of union cannot be perfectly realised any more than the ideal state of holiness or knowledge. We hold, then, that organization is not essential to the idea of the Church. When we pray for the Church we pray for no organized body, but for believers united to Christ and to each other by the indwelling of the Spirit.

2. After all, the great question is—What do the Scriptures say in answer to the two questions, What is the Church? What is the Christian? For you cannot make your idea of the Church, as Dr. Hodge well puts it, narrower than your idea of the Christian. Now, it is admitted by the brethren themselves that the belief of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel is all that is necessary to salvation. Therefore it is the profession of these doctrines—which are necessarily included in the "one faith" of Ephesians—that will be necessary to establish the claim of any society to be regarded as a portion of the true Church. True religion cannot be meant to include all the doctrines of true religion, nothing more and nothing less; for then there could be no perfect Church unless all its members were perfect in faith and in knowledge. Nothing can be essential to a Church, so far as truth or knowledge is concerned, that is not essential to union with Christ; and it is absurd to make more truth essential to the visible Church than the Lord has made essential to the invisible Church—that is, to salvation itself. The Brethren may say that the Church is a society in which the pure Word of God is preached, the ordinances of Christ duly administered, and discipline spiritually enforced. If this be a definition of the Church, there can be on their principles only one Church on earth—that is, their own—because all sects are more or less defective, according to Plymouthists, in doctrine, worship, and government; but this statement cannot be admitted for a moment as an enumeration of the essential attributes of such a body. A thing may be clearly taught in Scripture, and intended to be of universal obligation; but this is not intended to mean that it is essential to the being of a Church, for nothing can be essential to that which is not

essential to salvation. The Brethren make no distinction between a pure church and what is essential to the idea of the Church.

3. The Brethren will be likely to reply to these irresistible arguments—"But is not the Church to be one? Was it not originally one in external organization as well as in inward fellowship? Are Christians not bound to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?" The assumption is, of course, that the Church split up into sects and parties cannot now keep the unity of the Spirit, and therefore cannot be recognised as true churches at all. Indeed, it is asserted as an almost axiomatic truth that this unity is lost, and that its absence is the proof of apostacy. Now, it is exceedingly necessary to understand the exact significance of the apostle's expression, "keeping the unity of the Spirit," preceding as it does the reference to the sevenfold unity —one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all—which God alone keeps.* (1) Let us remember, then, that we are not commanded to keep the unity of the body, as the Brethren seem to think, but the unity of the Spirit. The unity of the body is immutable, and God alone keeps it. Neither are we commanded to make, but to keep this unity, which, in proportion as it is kept in the bond of peace, will lead toward visible oneness. (2) Then, again, it must be observed that the unity here enjoined was not external unity—for that already existed at Ephesus—but was a unity in view of internal differences. These we can well understand when we remember that the Ephesian church, like most others, was a mixed community of Jews and Gentiles whom Jesus Christ had made one by His Cross (Eph. ii. 14), bringing into the Jewish fold those "other sheep" to form together "one flock" under "one shepherd." Now, this oneness existed in the midst of great differences of ecclesiastical usage and order; because we know there were Judaizing churches that followed the rule of Moses, observing days—the apostles themselves, with all the Jews that believed, holding by the ceremonial law till the end of their lives (Acts xxi. 20—26). The Gentile

* Ephesians iv. 3—6.

churches, on the other hand, did not observe days nor follow the usage of the Jews, but took a course authorised by apostolic command itself. Indeed, many of the apostolic regulations for the government of the primitive churches were never committed to writing at all; and we may therefore justly infer that such regulations were in no way essential to the being of the Church (1 Cor. iv. 17, vii. 17, xi. 2, 23, 34; 2 Thess. ii. 15, iii. 6).* How preposterous, then, to speak of one uniform system of Church-order as existing in primitive times! If the differences that did undoubtedly exist in apostolic days did not destroy the unity of the body, it is difficult to see how similar differences in order, worship and discipline can affect it now. (3) But the use of the word "endeavouring" evidently implies the existence of differences at Ephesus, and that the unity of the Spirit may be kept with a greater or less degree of faithfulness. It is not the existence of such differences, but the determination not to tolerate them, that would break or impair the manifestation of this unity. The history of the Church shows that the enforcement of uniformity has always hindered this very unity. Let us therefore understand the

* Mr. Darby is resolved that every society connected with his name shall maintain the most absolute uniformity, and he is specially jealous respecting matters of discipline. He says, if different assemblies take different views of a matter of discipline, it is to break the unity of the body: as if this unity, which rests in the indwelling of the Spirit, were at all dependent on, or conditioned by, an exact agreement in matters of doctrine and practice. Surely it is not the bond of discipline, administered by the hands of fallible men, that keeps the body together, whose members are not churches at all, but individuals; and absolute unanimity of judgment in matters of discipline is no more essential to the unity of the body than it is to its salvation. To say that a "gathering" of Christians cannot err is worse than Popery. May not two assemblies differ in judgment? Can we follow both? If they differ, then human assemblies are fallible; it is impossible to act in harmony with them all; and each case must be tried on its own merits. "But was not the decision of the church at Corinth 'to put away from among them that wicked person' binding on all other churches?" We ask, Was their previous decision to retain him in fellowship equally so? Clearly not. If so, the Brethren are clearly wrong in their assumptions. In fact, the unity of the Spirit binds not bodies at all, but individuals. It binds them not to external uniformity, but to living oneness. It does not bind the Brethren merely, but all believers, and binds the Brethren to all they separate from and excommunicate!

exact force of the apostle's injunction. We are called in one body to God's peace, but the unity of the Spirit is disregarded, not when separation takes place, but when sectarianism springs up. Indeed, it is easy to conceive that there might be less unity of spirit manifested in the communion of a church externally one but inwardly distracted by differences, as at Corinth, than in the existence of two or three or ten bodies externally apart, yet recognising each other's essential relation to Christ and co-operating in Christian work. (4) The Brethren maintain that the prayer of our Lord in John xvii. points to external visible unity, because it was intended as a demonstration to the world.* The passage must be quoted at length to be properly understood: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Of course, this language cannot mean that believers, (mark, it is not the believers of one age, but of all ages, whose association with each other is externally impossible,) can be one as nearly, but as truly, as the Father and the Son are one. But this oneness has relation to mediatorship, for it is impossible for believers to be in the Father and the Son as the Father is in the Son, as to Divine essence. The Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father by the hypostatical union of the manhood to the Godhead in the person of the Saviour, as well as "by dear affection and inexpressible agreement and consent." Our Lord, therefore, prays that the disciples may be in both of them by the mystical union—not one merely, but "one *in us*"—in the fellowship of the Father and the Son, according to the doctrine of John. (1 John i. 3.) It is evident, in the nature of the case, that the bonds were not carnal but spiritual. They were to be one, as they were to be filled with one Spirit, as possessing "one faith and one baptism,"

* Mr. F. G. Patterson says in reference to this prayer: "His prayer was answered for a little moment—'that they all may be one.' But soon indeed did it fail, and then we find Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul the apostle, called out to reveal to us something that could never fail—the unity of the Spirit in the one body." (p. 16.) The Lord's prayer fail! Can it be possible?

and as of one heart, for they were to be "knit together in love," and as built up into one "spiritual house," which cannot mean the Church visible. If the oneness was to be external, then the prayer of our Saviour has never been answered except during the first days of the Gospel. The oneness that was to convince the world was not a oneness of organized government, but of faith and love, which is a far more impressive demonstration, because moral in its nature, than the spectacle of a rigid uniformity, repressing diversities of opinion and likely to lead to controversies and disruptions.

4. Let us now consider how this account of Scripture principles affects the position of the various Christian churches which now exist apart from each other, while acknowledging, with more or less fulness and cordiality, each other's Christian standing. We must first clear away the misrepresentations of the Brethren upon this subject. The conditions of membership in our churches are represented by the Brethren as restricted by creeds and by ideas of government and discipline, while nothing is required by the Brethren but the mere possession of Christian life. Nothing can be more false. The conditions of membership in our churches involve no absolute identity of religious opinion—merely the possession of religious life; so that a pious Arminian would not be excluded from the Lord's Table in a Presbyterian church, neither would a pious Calvinist from the Lord's Table in a Wesleyan church. Of course efforts would be made, in either case, to instruct the new member in what was believed to be a sounder theology, but his position in the church would be perfectly secure from the first. The Darbyites, on the contrary, departing from their own original principles—principles which they still, notwithstanding, disseminate in tracts to lure the unwary—will not break bread with a member of the Müllerite party, because "Bethesda" represents "unspeakable abomination." They make creed and discipline tests of fellowship; they reject those whom the Lord has received, and thus turn the Lord's Table into the Table of the Darbyites.*

* "Persons would be (or at least would formerly have been) received at the Lord's Table for occasional communion, who attended the Estab-

Yet, with consummate audacity, a leading Darbyite, Mr. William Kelly, can say of his sect, "Is it not large enough to admit every saint who walks as such, without imposing a single condition which he does not own?" As if, in his Guernsey chapel, he had not excluded all the followers of Mr. Müller and Mr. Newton on purely doctrinal or disciplinary grounds!* The sects, as the Brethren call them, are far more catholic than the Darbyites. They work together, and recognize each other's Church-standing. Mr. Patterson says the Brethren "are gathered on the ground of the one body." No more, we say, than other churches who assert with equal clearness the unity of the body. But it is not scriptural to say that believers are gathered on the ground of any body, for that is to say that they are gathered on the ground of what they corporately are, rather than on the ground of what He is who is both Head and Saviour. Their true ground is the grace wherein they stand, and they keep their footing in it by their faith. They are not gathered on the ground of being one flock, but they become one flock by obeying the Shepherd's voice. Yet the cant of Plymouthism for ever is—"Divine ground," "true Church ground," "the true ground of the assembly." Mr. Macintosh says, "The ground on which God's assembly is gathered is salvation or eternal life." If so, all the saved are on the grounds of God's assembly, though they should not be Darbyites.

5. The Brethren point to the independent existence of Christian denominations as in itself a practical denial of the unity of the body, and then produce their stock-argument about "the dead-letter office," which must be the natural

lishment, and even had they thought fit to attend habitually the ministry of one who maintained false doctrine, or who was himself a child of the devil. No question would have arisen about the reception of a Christian, who was himself a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. What, then, but the denominational idea—the idea of those meeting as we do constituting the Church, or at least the Church ruin, according to present favourite phraseology—could lead to such an interference with personal liberty as we now hear of?" (*Brethren Bewitched*, p. 2.) The Brethren now meet in the name of certain doctrines, and are therefore, on their own showing, a mere sect.

* Rev. F. Whitfield on "Plymouth Brethren." (London: Shaw and Co.)

destination of any epistle now despatched by the Lord to the Church of God in any one city or town, with its four or five denominations. What is this argument worth? We have already shown that nothing more is essential to the Church than is essential to salvation, and that organization is not essential to the unity of the Church. Therefore each one of these four or five denominations, if they all hold the "one faith," is a true Church of Christ—or, in other words, they are together the Church of Christ in that place. The Brethren, however, have no right to assume that there was only one worshipping society in each city or place; for there were at least two at Rome, which are separately mentioned—one represented by "all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Rom. i. 7), and another by "the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila" (Rom. xvi. 5); while one society could not possibly contain the full membership of the church at Jerusalem, especially when it contained many ten thousands (μυριάδες—Acts xxi. 20). The letter, then, must have been sent from church to church, variously constituted as they are proved to have been in point of order, as well as separated by difference of language, just as it would be sent from church to church among ourselves at the present day. If such a letter should be sent now, it would come to exactly the same parties as in apostolic times, because it would be addressed to the saints in such a place, no matter how separated they were externally; and we have yet to learn that the Sender of the letter, who is the Lord Himself, would have any difficulty in reaching His own people. It seems all along to be taken for granted by the Brethren that societies as such are members of Christ's body. It is of the Corinthian saints individually that the apostle says, "Ye are the members of Christ."

6. A leading Darbyite says the Church of God is not the Greek Church, nor the Roman Catholic Church, nor the Church of England, nor the Dissenters [nor, let us say, the Darbyites]. He brings up all these in succession, and disallows the claims of all. But can he tell us what Church of God is there on earth as distinguished from these various bodies? There are no other Christian organizations in the world except the Plymouth Brethren; but *they* cannot be the

Church of God in each particular place unless they contain all the saints in that place, for the Church consists of all the saints. In his earlier days Mr. Darby said, "I have no objection to the flock being called 'Church,' save the fear that, in imitation of ancient dissent, the idea might be allowed that it is the Church of the place. The Word recognises all the Christians of one place as forming the Church of that place" (*Works*, vol. iv., p. 345). Yet the time came when he could speak of "the one assembly of God in London"—not as including all the saints in London, but the little handful of his own followers! The Brethren claim to represent the unity of the one body; but if the unity be external, they do not represent it, for all the members of the body are not in the Plymouth societies. If they had succeeded in gathering all the saints out of all "the systems," so as not to leave a single saint in the apostacy, their claims might be admitted. Mr. Kelly says, with an air of apparent humility and self-denial, which is perfectly consistent with the loftiest assumption: "Our business is not to originate a Church of the present or the future, but to cleave to the Church which God has made." We never read in Scripture of cleaving to the Church: that is Romish phraseology; but of "cleaving to the Lord." But when did God make the Church, seeing it is not the Greek, or the Latin, or the Anglican, or that of the Dissenters? If He did not make it in 1830, when Darbyism arose, it must have existed previously; and if so, it must have been the Church of the sects. Then he says, "And consequently to confess the sin of all rivals, to repudiate them, and come out of them." This is impossible, for if he is to cleave to the Church God has made—a Church which must have existed among the sects before 1830—he cannot leave the sects without leaving the Church.

The Church, then, is the aggregate body of those whom Christ is not ashamed to call brethren, though the Darbyites deny us the title. Organization is not essential to its existence; and the unity of the Spirit can be as fairly maintained among ourselves as in the days of the apostles themselves, if we recognize each other as members of the body, apart from external government, and dwell together in love and peace.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH IN RUINS.

WE now come to consider the dispensational theory of the Brethren, which accounts for their peculiar attitude toward the churches, and especially for their loud demand that the Christians of all other churches shall at once withdraw from them and join the communion of the Brethren. They say the Church is in ruins; the rent state of Christendom is the proof; apostacy has fallen on the dispensation; the so-called churches are mere "forms of worldliness"; there is neither power anywhere to repair the ruins, nor is there direction given by the Lord to rebuild what has been cast down. The churches are, therefore, guilty of great presumption in trying to restore the lost unity of Christendom by ordaining pastors, receiving members, and setting up discipline. The true course is for saints to withdraw from all "the systems," and gather together simply as believers, on the ground of the promise of Christ—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). The Brethren do not attempt to rebuild the Church: they meet simply as believers.*

We shall consider three points in this chapter—viz., the

* "Brethren do not confound the outward professing Church and that which Christ will present to Himself: the former will be judged and cut off, the latter be with Christ in heaven. But they see in Scripture one recognized body on earth. They see all to be in ruins; that on the principles of existing professing bodies they must continue in the Establishment, which is false in all its principles, or join one sect and not be of another—be a member of it, which is not in Scripture: that the state of things is a state of ruin, but that God has provided for it in His Word, and that they can meet on the ground of the unity of the body of Christ, if only two or three, and find Christ in their midst, according to His promise."—*What the Christian has amid the Ruin of the Church*, p. 23.

alleged apostacy of this dispensation, the duty of separation from all existing churches, and the resource of the faithful in the midst of the apostacy.

I. *The Apostacy of the Dispensation.*

The Brethren declare that the Gentile Church is in the apostacy; that this condition agrees with New Testament prophecies, which announce that it shall apostatize and be cut off; that the state of the professing Church—"the great House of Christendom," as the Brethren call it—will become worse and worse, as well as the state of the world. They interpret the chapters of Matthew's Gospel which refer to the final judgment in a way to support this peculiar theory. They say that the twenty-fourth chapter foretells the judgment of the Jews; that the twenty-fifth chapter, with its parables of the ten virgins and the talents, foretells the judgment of the professing Church; and that the sublime scene of judgment at the end of the chapter, in which the sheep and the goats appear to the right and left of the Judge, refers, not to the final judgment at all, but to the judgment of the Gentile nations *in this world*. The Brethrenite movement is the "midnight cry" heard in feebleness, which shall at last awake the whole Church from its guilty sleep.

1. In the first place, we deny altogether the doctrine of Gentile apostacy in the Darbyite sense. There is not the least foundation for it in Scripture. There was to be an apostacy, but it was to be neither total nor final. The question is, What is the apostacy? The Brethren see it in the loss of unity, in the rent state of Christendom. We hold, however, that as Jewish apostacy involved, not the loss of unity—for till the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews were one religious commonwealth, however inwardly divided by sects—but the rejection of the authority, doctrines, and work of Christ, so the apostacy in Christendom involves a rejection of the authority, doctrines, and ordinances of Christ, but this rejection not by any means absolute or complete. There is nothing in the predicted apostacy of the New Testament that can apply to the Churches of the Reformation, however exactly it may apply to the Church of Rome. Of course, if the Brethren regard this Church as Catholic, according to its own assumption—

that is, as representing the whole Church on earth—the Gentile apostacy has been complete. But the Church of Rome is no more Catholic than it is infallible. What proof can the Brethren offer that the ἀποστάσία which developed into the Papacy of the Vatican decrees has destroyed the character of the dispensation? How can the Church, indeed, be in ruins if Christ is still continuing to build it? For when He said, "Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," He cannot have meant that the building should stop within a few years after His ascension—for the apostacy began in apostolic times—else we must concede that the gates of hell have prevailed against it. We deny that there is a word in the New Testament to sanction the idea that the Gentile Church is to be cut off on account of apostacy. A warning is certainly given in the eleventh of Romans that a certain course would expose to excision: not the loss of unity, but the loss of faith: for the apostle declares that the Gentiles stand, not in formal unity or in perfect purity, but simply by their faith. (Rom. xi. 20.) According to this passage, the loss of the Jews was to be their gain, and the restoration of the Jews, in a spiritual sense, their richer gain; but there is not a hint of total failure or apostacy. Yet Mr. Darby actually refers to this passage to prove that the Gentile Church shall be cut off. The apostle simply says, "Be not high-minded, but fear."

2. We must remember, however, that the state of things now is only the development of the state of things in apostolic days. Mr. F. Patterson admits that the apostacy (by which he means the loss of unity) began in apostolic days: "In fact, its manifested unity was gone soon after. (Acts ii.—vii.) The earthly order at Jerusalem was broken up at the martyrdom of Stephen. (Acts vii., viii.) The Church was the body of Christ, and acting as such, before it knew it was so, and before the conversion of Saul (Acts ix.), the instrument through whom it was revealed. Even then its manifested unity was well nigh gone" (p. 25). If so, why did not Christians fall back at once on the resource of the Brethren (Matt. xviii. 20)?—of which more hereafter. Now, if the apostacy had already begun in those days, as the

Brethren themselves admit, and if the dispensation was not thereby destroyed, how can it destroy the dispensation now? The Brethren hold that the leaven in the parable is the apostacy which is to leaven the whole lump; and that the tares and the grain of mustard-seed are likewise the apostacy which is to corrupt the whole Church. Now, though leaven in Scripture is usually applied to evil, it does not follow that it is so here, because such an interpretation is quite incongruous with the signification of the Kingdom in the other parables of the group.* Leaven represents indefinitely progress of any kind, and is here used by our Lord to signify the influence of the Kingdom in gradually assimilating and absorbing the world into itself. As Trench remarks, the figurative language of Scripture is not so stereotyped that one figure must always stand for one and the same thing. The devil is a lion; Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah: the dove is in one place remarked for its silliness, in another for its simplicity: so leaven may represent evil, but it operates for good likewise, as its effects on bread are to make it more tasteful, lighter, and more nourishing. The tares did not cover the whole field, so as to destroy the wheat—the parable is silent regarding the proportions of each at the harvest—but if the presence of tares caused the dispensation to fail, there never was a dispensation at all, for such tares as Ananias and Sapphira belonged to the very first days of the Church. There never was a period when there were no tares. It is quite absurd to suppose that the grain of mustard-seed growing into a great tree represents the apostacy, for if so, there was no mixture of good at all in the dispensation. There is only evil, though in the other parable there is both evil and good. It is asserted that Paul predicts the apostacy in the third chapter of his second Epistle to Timothy, where he speaks of perilous times when "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." So they always do; even in the apostle's days it was so: but what has this to do with the apostacy? The apostle does not say that these "evil men and seducers," though they may destroy themselves and others, will destroy the dispen-

* It is impossible to discuss this question here. It will be found discussed at length in treatises on the Millenarian controversy.

sation: he rather points to a check in their career—"But they shall proceed no farther, for their folly shall be manifest to all men." They were but a section of the Church visible, for they are here contrasted with "all men." It is useless to refer us to Jude and the Thessalonian Epistle for further evidence of the apostacy, unless it can be shown that the apostacy is to be complete and final, and has already destroyed the character of the dispensation.

II. *The Duty of Separation from all existing Churches.*

The Brethren hold that in the existing circumstances of a ruined dispensation the true method of keeping the unity of the Spirit is by separation from all evil. Their great dogma, indeed, is—"Separation from evil is God's principle of unity." They therefore announce that the true course for believers now is to withdraw from all religious societies called churches, and "to meet, a few sinners saved by grace, in separation from all ecclesiastical evil, owning no other gathering power than the Holy Ghost, and no other centre to which to be gathered but the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other creed but the Word of God." The cry to believers in all the "systems" is, therefore, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing;" while Plymouthism is declared to be the only possible foundation for uniting the disciples of Christ.*

* "Now, the Church of God is one body. Nevertheless we find to-day 1300 sects and parties. Which am I to join? But surely it must be *evil* to be a fellow-worker in supporting *parties*. Then I will join NONE; for God says there is one body. And if I was in one of the sects, I must straightway 'go out,' 'go forth,' 'separate,' 'depart.' And do what? 'Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit.' He gathers to the name of the Lord Jesus, and to none other. He gathers *believers*, and none other. He ministers *truth*, and not error. I walk in His unity, then, if I am thus gathered."—Davis, *What is the Church or Assembly of God?* p. 25. "How, then, is the unity of the Spirit to be observed? what is 'endeavouring' to do so? what is faithfulness to the nature of the Church, Christ's body, in an evil day? It is 'separation from evil.' My first duty must be to 'depart from iniquity.' It may be moral or doctrinal evil, evil assuming many shapes; I separate myself *from* it *to* Christ. Thus separated, I find myself in the fellowship of the Spirit of God—associated with the Holy Ghost here on earth."—Patterson, *Unity of the Spirit*, p. 7.

1. If the unity of the Spirit is only to be kept by a course of separation, it is a curious fact that the apostle, in showing the Ephesians *how* it is to be kept, never hints at separation at all, but speaks only of such graces as "lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering forbearing one another in love" (Eph. iv. 2)—graces seldom exemplified in the separations brought about by the Brethren.

2. This principle, so far from promoting the unity of the Church, is the most divisive that can be conceived. I may be allowed to quote an illustration from myself:—"The rejection of common error can never become a centre of union, for Protestants and Romanists may alike reject Arianism, and be still widely separated. There is uniting power in a common belief or in a common affection, but none in mere separation from evil. Judged by its results, it has everywhere been followed by the most mischievous consequences: it multiplies separations and divides the saints of God; wherever one saint sees evil and another sees none, it condemns the evil and passes by the good; it excludes those whom the Lord receives, and departs where He abides; and it separates not merely in public assemblies, but in the private relationships of life, two in one house being divided, not because one is a believer and another an unbeliever, but because they differ upon points of doctrine, discipline, and worship."* Baxter says to the Anabaptist sectaries of his day,—"Can you prove that Christ doth separate from all the Christians of the world which you separate from? or that they have no visible communion with Him? or that He taketh them for no churches, and disowneth the administration of all ministers whom you disown?"

3. The Brethren maintain that, as the bodies now called churches are not only false in their constitution but consist of believers and unbelievers, they are bound to separate from them. (We do not, by the way, deny the right of separation from a church in certain circumstances, but we object *in toto* to the grounds of Brethrenite separation.)

(1) They say the duty of separation is peremptory on the

* *British Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1873, p. 390.

grounds here stated, for the apostle said, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. vi. 17). I shall again quote from myself: "This passage, however, does not command believers to withdraw from the visible society at Corinth, which must have contained unbelievers—for it contained false apostles—but to separate from heathen sacrifices and customs: in a word, 'not to touch the unclean thing' in an idol's temple. The Scriptures do not certainly sanction a believer holding religious communion with an unbeliever as such; but it is quite a different thing if persons professing faith in the same Saviour are to separate upon a suggestion that one portion of them are unbelievers contrary to their own express avowal."* The passage is a quotation from the Old Testament: "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence; touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her" (Isa. lii. 11). It was a call to the Jews to come out of Babylon, and not a call for holy Jews to separate from unholy brethren. The text in Revelation xviii. 4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins," is a command to withdraw from the Romish Babylon, which we have already done; but the Brethren have yet to prove that the Church of God in our day is Babylon.

They also quote 2 Timothy ii. 19—21: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour." The Brethren's comment on the passage is as follows: "The whole of that which calls itself Christian is here looked at as 'a great house.' The Christian is of it outwardly, for he calls himself a Christian, and 'the great house' is all that calls itself Christian. But he cleanses himself personally from every vessel which is not to the Lord's honour." [The passage speaks rather of 'vessels of dishonour'!] "This is the rule of Christian faithfulness; and thus personally cleansed from fellowship with evil, we shall be a vessel to honour, fit for the Master's use." The Brethren say the great house is not the Church,

* *Ibid.* p. 391.

but Christendom, as if the great house of 2 Timothy did not correspond to the "house of God the pillar and ground of the truth" of 1 Timothy. Two classes of vessels are no doubt there—the righteous and the wicked; but it is only the vessels to honour that belong to the Church. The others are in it, not of it. But the passage proves nothing for the Brethren. (*a*) It does not warrant separation from other vessels of honour. (*b*) It refers to such heretics as Hymenæus and Philetus, who denied the resurrection. (ver. 17.) We will not condemn the Brethren for separating from heretics of this class. (*c*) The passage does not say a word about separation. What is the "purging"? Brethren answer, "Withdrawing from the table where those not to the Lord's honour are found." "If I continue with such I shall become unclean." But the apostle does not say here what he says in 1 Timothy vi. 5, "From such withdraw thyself," or, as in Titus iii. 10, "A man that is a heretic avoid"; but "If any man purge himself (ἐκκαθάρῃ) from these." He does not teach the believer how to keep himself clean, but how to get himself cleansed, for the man is supposed to be already defiled. He is "to cleanse himself." If your hands have become soiled by touching a dirty vessel, it will not clean your hands to put the vessel outside the house. Separation of oneself is not cleansing oneself. The passage is a word of counsel to those who already needed cleansing within. But even suppose separation were implied in the counsel in question, that may, according to Scripture, be effected in various ways. The Church may separate the heretic by "casting him out"; believers may "avoid" him; or they may, in a last resort, withdraw from a society which fails to cast him out, though there is no counsel to this effect contained in the passage.

(2) The practical question is, however, In what respects do our churches now differ from the churches of New Testament times? The Brethren say, The churches then consisted only of believers; ours, of believers and unbelievers. We reply, The Church still consists only of believers; but our churches, like the Corinthian and Philippian churches, have members in their external communion

who are not in the Church at all. There were such members in the Primitive Church, but because they professed to be believers they were addressed as such, as we have already shown.* Mr. Borlase, a Brother, says: "There is all the difference imaginable between a body as in the primitive churches, proceeding upon the principle of recognizing as its members Christians only, gathering the Church out of the world, and a state of things which systematically and designedly includes, without the slightest attempt at discrimination, all sorts and degrees, godly and ungodly—in short, which is framed throughout, theoretically and practically, to include the world." It is implied that the Brethren act upon the true principle. But there is not a church in our day—Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist or Methodist—that does not proceed theoretically upon the principle that the Church consists only of saints, and that none but saints ought to enter its Communion. All their creeds, confessions and catechisms are constructed upon this principle. It is false to say that they are intended to include the world. The world may find its way into them, just as it did into the primitive churches, and into the churches of the Brethren, but they are, nevertheless, churches still. It is argued that our churches, with their mixed membership, make the idea of the "one body" impossible. We have already proved that the unity of the body is in no sense external; but, conceding the point for a moment, let us ask, how could the seven churches of Asia, with their mixed membership, make the idea of the "one body" possible any more than our

* We find there were fornicators, sectaries and heretics in the church at Corinth: "some had not the knowledge of God." Ananias and Sapphira were in the church at Jerusalem; the woman Jezebel was in the church at Thyatira; the Nicolaitans were at Pergamos; the worst of heretics joined in the love-feasts, "feeding without fear"; some were "filthy dreamers, who defile the flesh;" some were "grievous wolves entering in, not sparing the flock;" there were "many antichrists;" there were Hymenæus and Philetus and other errorists: "false apostles, deceitful workers;" and certain who "subverted the souls of the disciples." Well may Mr. Baxter say, "Before you judge any church to be no church, be able to prove it hath worse crimes to nullify it than any of these had. For none of these were for these faults pronounced no churches of Christ."

churches? The case of these seven churches is the *crux* of the Brethren. They do not know what to do with it, because there is no command to the saints to withdraw from them.* Mr. Darby says the principle was right, and there was no ground for separation. Another Brother says: "The seven assemblies of Asia, spite of the evil found in nearly all, were really churches; they were gatherings of saints, *or of those believed to be such*" [mark the qualification], "separate from the world, into some of which Satan had succeeded in introducing more or less grave evils." But Mr. Darby has told us we are to go, not on the ground of the theoretical correctness of the system, but of the practical evils that accompany it. He says: "Christians will often find themselves in strange situations who disregard actual evil on the assumption that the system which produces it is theoretically correct; for in this manner there may be no limit to the measure of practical wickedness that may be tolerated, while conscience satisfies itself on the plea of an abstract excellence which may turn out to be a mere shadow or worse. Such, however, is not the path of sound Christian principle, which at once pronounces that the actual evil *is* the ground to go upon: God acts upon it, *even though the system be His own.*" (*Christian Witness*, 1834, vol. i., p. 253.) An important concession! Quite as important as another made by him: "Without being able to recall to my mind all such cases, there is not a single one that I know of in which the corruption of an institution is a reason for abandoning it." (*Works*, vol. iv., p. 436.) What consistency!

4. But the Brethren separate from believers as well as unbelievers—even from believers holding no fundamental error; and this in opposition to all their old principles. The Brethren used to speak of "strict Baptists" as a sect,

* Mr. Patterson talks foolishly about it: "Many say, 'Look at all the evil that is in the seven churches and the like—and the Lord does not direct His people to leave them!' Shall I tell you why? For this reason: you never have in them a single direction as to what you are to do but one. That is, you are to hear the Church? No, it is corrupt: but what the Spirit says to her; then you find the Blessing promised to him that overcometh." What trifling with Scripture! The epistles are *full* of directions. I count sixteen of them.

because they received not "believers" as such, but only "baptized believers." The Brethren now do not receive believers as such, but only believers holding certain views and practising certain order and discipline. If the Brethren unite on principles which exclude other brethren in Christ, their union is sectarian. It is no longer true for them to say, "We receive all believers." It is really—"all believers who hold our views." They sever believer from believer, some members of Christ from other members of Christ; and to sever where God unites is as evil in principle as to unite where He would divide. The true canon of reception is, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." More cannot be required for fellowship with the disciples than God requires for fellowship with Himself. But you say, "'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'" Yet Paul did not excommunicate the whole Church at Corinth, nor leave its fellowship, though the leaven was there. You say, "Does not John tell the elect lady not to receive certain into her house who brought not the true doctrine of Christ?" This does not refer to Church-action at all, nor to the Lord's Table, but to hospitality in a private house; and the visitor in question was no believer, but "an antichrist"—a rejecter of Christianity—and, moreover, not a private person but a teacher. The passage proves that Christians may commit sin by association with sinners; but the expression "he that biddeth him God-speed" implies sympathy with his error or his errand. It cannot condemn all association with sinners, for it would condemn our Lord for eating with sinners.

III. *The Resource of the Faithful in the Evil Day.*

We must now hasten on to notice the resource of the Brethren in the midst of surrounding apostacy. They must separate from all the "systems" called "churches"; but what must they do for themselves, or what provision has the Lord made for them in the "cloudy and dark day"? *It is a single text of Scripture* (Matt. xviii. 20)—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This is their resource in the apostacy. It is quoted, again and again, in every tract, pamphlet or volume they have published for forty years, as if *they* had

first discovered it in the Bible—though, strange to say, it appears in that very Gospel which they undervalue as Jewish, and therefore as inferior to the Epistles of Paul.* This passage, it appears, justifies the Brethren in withdrawing from all churches whatsoever, to meet simply as disciples in the name of Jesus.†

1. We may well ask, Where is it said that believers are, during the ruin of this dispensation, to "gather" ‡ on the

* The late Dr. Tregelles said: "Whatever has been felt as a difficulty has been set aside by saying it is 'Jewish'; and that one word has been deemed to be quite enough to show that it has nothing to do with the Church. On this principle the application of very much of the New Testament has been avoided." "I have heard it maintained that the Lord's Supper, as instituted, and as recorded in the Gospels, is so simply 'Jewish,' that the command 'This do in remembrance of me' could be no warrant to us for observing it, if the apostle Paul had not received of the Lord that which also he delivered to the Corinthians." "In this manner the first three Gospels have been called 'Jewish' whenever any portion of their teaching was felt as a difficulty."

† "It will not do to-day to seek to reform things; we cannot do it. The Holy Ghost tells us they will get worse and worse. In all simplicity, then, owning our weakness, let us take what God gives us. We have a blessed resource in Matthew xviii. 20. That is a wonderful resource. It is not reformation we are to try; nor to set up a new sect. We must not do that; we must go back to what is the oldest of everything—God's principle of gathering His saints. The ground the disciples took is the ground for believers to take in all ages."—Davis, p. 30.

‡ We beg pardon—"to be gathered"; for the Brethren assure us that, according to the passage, believers are not said to meet or to gather—(that would be a human arrangement)—but "to be gathered by the Holy Ghost" to the name of Jesus. But Scripture never speaks of the Holy Ghost gathering believers at all; and believers are never said to be gathered to Jesus, except in Thessalonians, where the expression "by our gathering together unto Him" refers to the time and circumstances of His second coming. (2 Thess. ii. 1.) The word *συνηγμενοι* is the commonest word used in the New Testament for assembling. It expresses the gathering of the Pharisees to Christ (Matt. xxii. 41)—the gathering of eagles to their prey (Matt. xxiv. 28)—the gathering of the crowd that demanded Jesus' death (Matt. xxvii. 17)—and the simple gathering to Christ's ministry (Matt. xiii. 2). How absurd, then, is the distinction based upon it by Brethren! Yet if they are simply gathered—that is, by no act of their own, but by the Spirit's prompting—they can have no *form* of worship, no agreed rules of practice, no hymnbook. Some will be gathered at ten o'clock; others at twelve; others at two. The worship will be as diverse as possible. Yet they meet, like other people, at a uniform hour, and their forms of worship, government and discipline are exactly alike.

authority of this passage? Did Jesus say it was for the period of ruin? Did He say that all other Scripture but this was to be in abeyance in Gentile times? Where did He tell His disciples that this passage was to remain dormant during the entire ministry of the apostles, and only to take effect after all the rule and discipline of the apostolic Church had passed away? He said, "On this rock will I build my Church." Is the one passage more repealed than the other? If Matthew xviii. 20 was "all-sufficient," as Mr. Macintosh says, "for the guidance of saints in the day of ruin," why should He have built His Church on the rock at all?

2. And if Matthew xviii. 20 be all-sufficient, why do Brethren refer to 1 Corinthians xiv. for their doctrine of ministry? If the chapter in Corinthians has survived the failure of the dispensation, why have not the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, giving the qualifications of bishops and deacons, similarly survived? Was not the Church in Corinth in possession of Christ's promise in Matthew, in all the plenitude of primitive gifts and powers? How, then, can the promise be peculiar, as the Brethren allege, to a period of apostacy? The Brethren admit that the apostacy began in apostolic times; but where is the proof that believers began then, discarding all other Scripture, to meet on the ground of this promise? And if they did not, why did they not? Do the Brethren understand this promise better than the primitive Christians? Was it *their* resource in the apostacy, to the exclusion of other Scripture? If it had been added to Scripture by special revelation in 1830, when Darbyism arose, we could feel the force of the argument.

If we are to believe, however, that there is no Church except under this passage, then the Church ceases to exist in the intervals of worship—that is, when the twos and threes are not gathered. The gathering makes the Church. No gathering, no Church. Mr. Macintosh says,—"But the Holy Ghost gathers souls to Jesus on the ground of salvation; and *this*, wherever convened, is the assembly of God." Surely it is the assembly of God, whether convened or not. Is it only the assembly of God when convened?

3. The Brethren admit that "the name of Christ" in the promise signifies authority: why, then, do they not

rebuild the Church? If His name is sufficient, as Mr. Macintosh says, "not only for personal salvation, but for all the exigencies of the assembly—for worship, communion, ministry, discipline, government, everything"—then, how can the Church be in ruins? And why should there be any difficulty in rebuilding it, when you have the name of Christ with you? Why, too, should Paul have thought it necessary to write his Epistles to Timothy and Titus? Mr. Macintosh says, "We can trust Christ to keep order in His own house." If so, why should Paul say to Timothy—"that* thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God"? Why should he have given Timothy so many directions?

4. And, after all, what reason is there for believing that the Brethren are the only people who are meeting on the ground of this blessed promise? Mr. W. Kelly cuts all the churches out of their inheritance by this oracular announcement—that "it is not the fact of being Christians that constitutes God's assembly (Church), but their being gathered to the name of Jesus." If the sects have no share in the promise, it is remarkable that they have been more blessed than the Brethren with the presence of Jesus; for, according to Mr. James Grant's calculation, there are only fifteen thousand Darbyites in the United Kingdom, while the saints in the "systems" cannot be even approximately reckoned. The Brethren themselves admit that they usually get their converts ready-made in the sects: that is, the majority of the fifteen thousand Darbyites have been converted in what they call "the wide dominions of the apostacy." But if the churches have no share in the promise, then it remained a promise unfulfilled for eighteen hundred years—or, in other words, till the Darbyites arose in 1830. Is there no pity in Darbyism? Can it be possible

* Mr. Macintosh says: "We may be asked, Where are we to find this thing that you call the 'assembly of God' from the days of the apostles up till the nineteenth century? Our answer is simply this: Both then and now, we find the assembly of God in the pages of the New Testament." (p. 45.) A most astonishing statement! Surely the assembly of God in Paul's days existed outside the pages of the New Testament—even before a page of the New Testament was written!

that Jesus never met with the twos and threes for eighteen centuries? After all, if salvation be possible in the "apostacy," the Brethren can offer us nothing greater than that, for, dispensationally, they can hold no higher place in heaven than their neighbours. We prefer, then, for obvious reasons, to remain in "the apostacy," where there is at least less heresy and high-mindedness, more spirituality, and less bitterness than among Brethren; and we shall continue, in spite of all warnings against our presumption, to build up, with God's help, "the ruins of the Church," in the happy conviction that we still have the word of His grace left to build us up, as living stones, into that spiritual house which is the Church, the body of Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

INCONSISTENCIES.

WE shall now briefly notice the altogether false and insincere position of the Darbyites as manifested in the most cursory comparison of their earlier with their later publications on the doctrine of the Church. They reprobate the idea of rebuilding the Church. All their earlier tracts teach this doctrine. In 1846 Mr. Darby said, "I have said, we are the witnesses of the weakness and low estate of the Church." "Power the Church has none." "If we think to set up the Church again, I say, God forbid." "Hence, government of bodies, in an authorized way, I believe there is none: where this is assumed, I believe there will be confusion." (Letter of Mr. Darby to Mr. Jukes, February, 1846.) "Before I can accede to your pretensions, I must see that an union of two or three, or two or three and twenty, are entitled to take the name of the Church of God, when that Church was (originally) an assemblage of all true believers." (*Reflections on the Ruined Condition of the Church*, p. 9.) Yet now Mr. Darby can speak of "the one assembly of God in London"! * Not a word of the gathering of twos and threes! "The one assembly" was first used in 1861, to designate those gatherings acting in unison with Mr. Darby, and it only recalls the arrogant and exclusive pretensions of Romanism and Irvingism. What a curious irony runs through Plymouth history! Mr. Darby charged Mr. Newton with clericalism in 1845, and has now himself established a system of the sternest and most despotic ecclesiasticism.

* The word "assembly" is substituted for Church in order to disguise somewhat the change of front. The tracts speak of the sin of attempting to rebuild the Church. But there is no harm in trying to rebuild or restore the assembly!

But let us now ask, what is the difference between the Brethren and the churches in the year 1879? What are they doing that we are not doing? What are we doing that they are not trying to do? They are preaching the Gospel; they are edifying the saints; they hold their meetings, in which they sing hymns, expound Scripture, and break bread as disciples of Christ; and they exercise discipline and government, for they determine who shall and who shall not belong to their communion. These things we are doing. If this is rebuilding the Church, they are working as hard at it as we are; with this difference, however—that they are building up with stones ready made and polished, in our grounds. Where is the difference, then, between their position and ours? We cannot see it. Of course, we do not discuss in this connexion what may be called the denominational points that separate us from the Darbyites—those points in which we and they may respectively contest a nearer approach to the example of apostolic times. But if their meetings are mere gatherings, according to their original principle, what right have they, in the present ruin of the Church, to set up discipline at all, and to say who shall or who shall not come to the Lord's Table? If the Holy Spirit gathers them to it, why should Darbyite leaders try to keep them back? Why should there be a superintendence of the flock, when the old gathering simply acknowledged the individual responsibility of saints to Christ? Why this machinery of correspondence with other gatherings, and the manifest organization of the whole system, after something like the forms of Presbyterianism? These arrangements were all very well for New Testament times, but they are wholly misplaced and contradictory for a period of ruin. What were once mere "gatherings" are now "a body," with a corporate action maintained, outside the limited sphere of the two or three.* Originally, Brethren would not reject those whom the Lord

* There is a conclave in London, meeting, we believe, on Saturday nights, which regulates all the Darbyite "gatherings." It is virtually a council of Presbyters, but with no representative character, assembling to administer the affairs of the Church. Yet, where is there a trace of this council in Matthew xviii. 20? There is not a word there of dis-

had received, and therefore received all Christians into communion, without demanding their separation from ecclesiastical evil; and Mr. Darby himself once gloried that he could welcome a Roman Catholic, if he was on the foundation, and hold fellowship with him at the Lord's Table; yet in 1845 he ended with refusing fellowship with saints from whom he differed in no vital points whatever. Yet Mr. Darby is the author of this sentence, which seals his own condemnation: "The moment anything is introduced as a point of unity which the Lord has not commanded, there is room for the sin of schism." Can anything be plainer than that the Darbyites have shifted their ground, and are now engaged, as busily as others, in rebuilding the Church? Their present position is most pointedly condemned in their own tracts; yet, with an extraordinary hardihood, they continue to fight their battles with the old theories as if their ground had been clear and consistent all along from the beginning.

It is characteristic of the Brethren that, in the development of their theology, they have come to assign an altogether undue place to their doctrine of the Church. They speak of it as "the most important of all truths"—as "God's highest truth"—as "this wondrous truth which has lain dormant so long"—as "His leading truth in the interval or period in which we live" (Patterson's *One Body and One Spirit*), merely because Paul speaks of it as "a great mystery" (Eph. v. 32). Surely the doctrine of Christ's Person and work—"the great mystery of godliness"—is a transcendently more important truth. "Christ is "a far higher thing" than the Church. The apostle never gloried in the "one body" as the Brethren do, but always in the cross of Christ. Mr. Patterson says that "what he is before God, a member of the body by one Spirit," is "a reality which will keep his soul steady in the midst of every ruin: it is

cipline or government. The gatherings of the Brethren either constituted a new sect, or they were the Church of Christ.

"Without rulers, without government, without pastoral authority, they get on from time to time by the management of coteries, and by the influence of certain individuals in different gatherings, who more or less assume, as it were by accident, the direction of affairs."—*Address to Plymouth Brethren*, 1862.

the only thing that can do this." But the Scriptures always represent the Christian's security as depending upon Christ rather than upon himself, or upon his view of himself. This writer offers the saints as "a divine resting-place for their feet in the midst of the confusion of the great house of Christendom," not the mediation of Christ, or Christ Himself, but "the ground of the one body of Christ by the Spirit"; and this is offered as "their only acceptable position in the sight of God," though clearly our acceptance is in the Beloved. The Saviour is Himself a surer ground of confidence than any result of His glorious work. Yet Mr. Patterson speaks of the Church as "the city of refuge," just as Mr. W. Kelly speaks of it as "the only solid divine rock," after the manner of Romanists. It is the special offence of such writers that they degrade the cross of Christ to a merely secondary place—in fact, they make it a grand instrument to some higher end—"the one body;" while they love to expatiate upon what they are in Christ rather than on what He is to them, with a tendency to be led away from the blood of sprinkling to seek their rest in their own Christian state. It is therefore quite characteristic of them to see in the Lord's Supper, not an exhibition of Christ's death and sufferings, but "the communion of the one body of Christ which is here in the world." When the apostle says, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" the body referred to is not, according to Mr. Patterson, the Lord's human body, but the mystical body, the Church! In that case we reply that, as the bread was to be broken, the unity of the one body was, after all, to be a broken unity! It is a sad travesty of the ordinance to represent God's children, when they come to the Lord's Table, as doing so "on the ground of the one body," or "of what we really are," instead of regarding rather the Lord's gracious invitation and His self-sacrificing love. The self-examination enjoined by the apostle had very little indeed to do with anything like this proud recollection of their own spiritual selves! We object to the attempts of such writers to magnify the importance of the Church as the one body at the expense of Him who is its Head and Saviour.

BOOK II.—THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I.

PRESIDENCY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THE Brethren believe that their meetings are held under the presidency of the Holy Ghost, while those of the churches are under the presidency of man.* They speak of ours as "a one-man ministry."

It is a remarkable fact, in the case of Christians who boast of adhering so strictly to the letter of Scripture, that the expressions so common in all their writings—"the

* "The Holy Ghost is President of the Assembly; in any meeting belonging to the religious denominations of the present day, such presidency is forgotten, and a man fills his place; but in the assembly the Holy Ghost, the true Vicar of Christ, is the sole President, Guide, and Director, and in its ministry no man must take any part but that which the Holy Ghost assigns him: the assembly meets on the principle that God the Holy Ghost alone has a right to speak, and by whom He will.

"We search in vain in the New Testament for any Church-government except the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost."—*Christ the Centre*, p. 7.

"If God is there, is He not to make His presence known? If He do, it is a manifestation of the Spirit in the individual who acts; it is a gift, and, if you please, an impulse. It is God acting: that is the great point."—Darby, *Presence and Operation of the Spirit*, p. 21.

"We meet on the principle that God the Holy Ghost (who dwells in believers individually, and in the body collectively) alone has a right to speak in the meeting, and He has a right to speak by whom He will, whether in occasional or more frequent ministrations."—*Christian Fellowship: Torquay statement.* This is not very consistent with the Brethren's original "principle": "God's broad foundation is clearly set aside, when any portion of truth, beyond the knowledge of Jesus unto eternal life, is made the condition of full communion."—*Union of Christians*, p. 2.

presidency of the Spirit," "the presence of the Spirit," "the ministry of the Spirit" (as opposed to the so-called "one-man ministry" of the churches), are never once found in Scripture. We read of the presence of Christ frequently, but never of the Spirit. The true word, as to the Spirit, is his "abiding." (John xiv. 16.)

Let us now examine the Scripture evidence adduced for the doctrine of the Spirit's presidency. There are just six texts to support this fundamental tenet of the Brethren.

1. Matthew xviii. 20: "For where two or three are gathered unto (εἰς) my name, there am I in the midst of them." (1) We reply, if this implies presidency, it is that of Jesus Christ, not of the Holy Ghost. The Brethren say, however, "If Jesus is present with His chosen, it is by the power and in the person of the Holy Ghost." Yes; whether they are gathered for worship, or at home in their dwellings, and therefore not gathered. The Brethren quote John xiv. 18—"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"—and infer that Christ's coming is the coming of the Spirit. But the coming here is Christ's second coming, not the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost; for it was a coming at which He would take them to Himself. The Spirit abides in the Church universal and in the Church particular, but He abides with the saints in the latter case in the same sense when they are met for worship and when they are apart. (2) There is not a word in this passage about gifts. It embraces all assemblies of believers, and does not stipulate for open communion or liberty of ministry. It is the least ecclesiastical passage in Scripture. The Brethren say it refers not to the object for which the two or three are gathered, but rather to the ground or principle on which they are gathered. It refers to both, for the meeting was for prayer—we might say for prayer alone, judging by the previous verse—"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything ye shall ask"; and the promise is that there will be an answer to such petitions offered in the name of Christ. Our Lord, then, does not refer to the Holy Spirit at all, but to the disciples' recognition of the value of His own name.

2. 1 Corinthians xiv. 33: "For God is not the author

of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." The Greek is, "He is not the God of confusion, but of peace." What has this to do with the Spirit's presidency in the assemblies? The name of the Spirit is not even mentioned. And if there be a Divine presidency, such as secures peace and not confusion in the assemblies, why does Paul presume to rebuke the proceedings of the Corinth assembly? And why should he tell the saints how many should speak at a time, and what gifts they should cultivate? And why, above all, should he attempt to supersede the Spirit's presidency by saying, "The rest will I set in order when I come"?

3. Ephesians ii. 20—22: "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God *through the Spirit*." There is no reference here to the assembling of the saints for worship. The reference is to the Church as the body of Christ, in which the Holy Ghost is the indwelling Spirit. The Brethren must prove that the assembly—that is, where the saints are met for worship—is the special sphere of the Spirit. The statement of the passage was just as true when the Ephesian saints were at home pursuing their ordinary callings as when they were met for worship. The tenses of the verbs confirm this view, for the building is not said to be complete, but in process of erection —"is increasing"—and "ye are being builded together." Besides, "all the building," in verse 21, refers to the Church universal, not to the church at Ephesus.

4. 1 Corinthians xiv.—This whole chapter is justly regarded as referring to the open meetings of the saints. Here, if anywhere, shall we hear of the Spirit's presidency. (1) But how comes it to pass that the name of the Holy Ghost never occurs in it from beginning to end? "God" is mentioned seven times, the "Lord" twice, but the "Spirit" never. Is this not strange? Yet in the twelfth chapter, where His place in the Church universal is recognised, He is named eleven times. (2) This chapter is full of rules for the exercise of gifts. But the Spirit needs no rules. The

saints at Corinth did certainly need them. Brethren say—"Paul could regulate the Spirit's gifts by the faith and conscience of each." But, singular to say, the rules enjoined by Paul are described as "from the Lord"—that is, Christ, not the Spirit. But, in any case, what becomes of the Spirit's regulating the assembly? What right has Paul to say, "The rest will I set in order when I come"? * The Holy Spirit is *not* the regulator! There is not a word in the chapter about "waiting on the Spirit in the midst," or "waiting for the Spirit's impulse." In fact, the apostle asserts human responsibility in the exercise of gifts; else he would never have awarded praise or blame. The Brethren say: "We meet on the principle that the Holy Ghost alone has a right to speak in the meeting;" but Paul regards *men* as speaking at Corinth. It is not "the Spirit speaketh by one man in a tongue," but "*he* that speaketh in a tongue." It is not "if the Spirit prophesy," but "if *all* prophesy." †

(3) But we object still further to the Brethren's doctrine, because it makes the Holy Spirit Head of the Church instead of Jesus Christ. Dr. Tregelles well says: "The Spirit in none of His works or operations must be put in the place of Christ, whom He hath come to glorify. The Spirit is not the Head of the Church, but Christ." And, again: "Pastors and teachers are the appointment of Christ Himself, as the risen Head of the Church, and as the Lord exercising His rightful dominion." It is a suggestive fact that Paul says of Christ, not of the Spirit, "He Himself (αὐτὸς) gave some to be apostles," etc. (Eph. iv. 11).

5. Hebrews ii. 12.—"Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." This refers not to the Spirit, but to Christ, who is spoken of in the Psalm here

* Paul not only makes himself president at Corinth, but seems to put himself in Christ's place: "We pray you in Christ's stead."

† The Brethren speak of the ministry of the Spirit as opposed to man's ministry. What does Scripture say? Jesus is called a minister (Heb. viii. 6), but the Holy Ghost never. We read (2 Cor. iii. 8) of "the ministration of the Spirit," in allusion to the bestowal of gifts by apostles' hands. In Scripture the ministry is always *man's:* "Make full proof of *thy* ministry"; "If any *man* minister."

quoted (Ps. xxii. 22), not as president, but as worshipper in the assembly.

6. 1 Corinthians iii. 16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" But the temple is not the Church met for worship. The Holy Ghost dwells in believers (whose "bodies are His temple"), when they are apart as well as when they are assembled.

These are all the passages adduced by the Brethren to prove the presidency of the Holy Ghost.

After all, if this Divine presidency existed in New Testament times, why should Paul direct Timothy and Titus about the ordaining of elders? Where was the Spirit's presidency in the Philippian church, which had its bishops and deacons, and in those Hebrew churches which were exhorted to "remember those that had the rule over them"?

If the Brethren, indeed, have the Spirit's presidency in their assemblies, why do they speak of their weakness?

CHAPTER II.

THE EXISTENCE AND EXERCISE OF GIFTS.

THE Brethren argue as if all the gifts of apostolic times remain, and they blame the churches for not allowing these gifts free scope and development in their worshipping arrangements. The time was when they scouted the distinction generally made between ordinary and extraordinary gifts: "The continuousness of the promise, 'He shall abide with you for ever,' made way for seeing that the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit was not warranted by the Spirit." (*Christian Witness*, vol. i., p. 275.) But they have learned a little caution by the exigencies of controversy, and they now admit that the gifts of miracle and inspiration have ceased. But still—very unfairly, we must say—they argue with the churches on the principle that all the gifts remain, and that they possess them, more or less fully developed. Some of them would make the gifts objects of faith: "In answer to the objection, 'I do not see it; I do not *see* gift in the Church *now*,' one might remark, That is scarcely the ground of *faith*. It is better to question our own perception than the faithfulness of God!" As if the gifts of apostolic times had not been visible manifestations, and not mere objects of faith! The Brethren incline to this view because they base their system of worship on 1 Corinthians xiv., where, beyond all question, there was the display of extraordinary gifts. A writer well says: "When arguing with Churchmen and Dissenters you assume that you have the gifts of old, and condemn them because they do not give liberty to these gifts in their assemblies. You declare that this freedom to the gifts is essential to the very existence of a Church of Christ, and teach that all should leave any body where this is not carried out. Yet, when arguing with those who

desire and pray for the gifts of miracle and inspiration, you say, 'They have ceased and cannot be restored.' Is this honest?" Captain Hall says, in the same strain: "My trouble is this—that you and others quote Scripture in its highest descriptions of the Church's primitive ways, as you say, taking the twelfth and fourteenth of 1 Corinthians, and apply it with great freedom in proving the defects of others; but when it is turned against yourselves, you deny its just application to such days as ours. If the Bible in its description of God's ways in the Church may be used against others, we ought to judge ourselves by it in the same way."

1. If the Brethren admit that they do not possess extraordinary gifts,* we are at a loss to know what gifts they possess that the churches do not equally enjoy.

2. They stoutly maintain, however, that they have gifts of prophecy. (1) The question can be easily settled by determining the character of prophecy in Scripture, where it is never used but *in an inspired sense.* Prophecy meant immediate revelation in the Old Testament: so does it in the New Testament. (Eph. iii. 5.) The prophets of the New Testament were not mere teachers; for they are distinguished from teachers in 1 Corinthians xii. 29 and Ephesians iv. 11; neither were they preachers of the Gospel, for they are likewise distinguished from evangelists (Eph. iv. 11). Women might be prophetesses, but they could neither preach nor teach. (2) Why, then, do the Brethren apply the rules for using tongues and prophecy to those who have neither the one nor the other? They admit—"We have not the miraculous gifts of 1 Corinthians, but

* The extraordinary gifts were not the result of regeneration or holiness, but were imparted either directly by the Spirit, as at Pentecost, or by the laying on of apostles' hands. It was *after* the Samaritans believed (Acts viii. 12—21) that Peter and John laid their hands on them, and "they received the Holy Ghost." So, likewise, with the twelve disciples at Ephesus—"Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Ghost came on them." The Gentile believers with Cornelius received miraculous gift by the Holy Ghost falling on them (Acts x. 45, 46). These gifts were always open manifestations of the Spirit, and could not therefore be denied. It is quite clear, therefore, that the Brethren have no extraordinary gifts, because there are no apostles now to lay hands upon disciples.

we have the non-miraculous ones of Ephesians iv." Well may an acute critic say—"Why, then, pretend to meet on ground and on rules which were given of old solely to the possessor of miraculous gifts? How do regulations for prophecy and tongues apply directly to those who have neither? Why profess to meet on the ground of miraculous gifts, especially when you carefully insist that gifts of miracle and inspiration are not to be expected now?" (Govett's *Church of God.*)

We must now consider the Brethren's doctrine concerning the exercise of gift.

They hold that all preparation for the exercise of gift, before coming to the assembly, is sinful. To make previous preparation is to deny the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost.*

1. We reply that, even when extraordinary gifts were in existence, this was not the rule: "When ye come together, each HATH (ἔχει) a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." Paul does not reprove them for preparing beforehand. The psalm was the result of thought.

2. This doctrine involves inspiration and infallibility; for, if the Spirit only speaks, the speaking must be infallible. Yet a writer is not afraid to say, "It is not sobriety as a Christian to overlook or deny the present direct guidance, by the Lord through His Spirit, of His disciples, as being something over and above the written word, slow as we may be to understand it." (*Present Testimony*, p. 56.)

3. On this principle, how can the speaker be either praised or blamed? Yet Paul censures the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xiv.)

4. The Corinthians might have replied to Paul's rebukes, "We are the passive instruments of the power that uses us: blame the power, not us." But Paul blamed *them* for the

* "He knew for the first no preparation save faith and a little prayer, perhaps."—*Testimony of a Saint*, p. 8.

When Mr. B. W. Newton admitted preparation for addressing the saints, Brother Haffner said—"With what humiliation I now appear in the presence of God for having so long retained in my bosom the knowledge that our poor brother did practically deny the present teachings and guidance of the Holy Ghost!"

disorders that arose. He did not say, like the Brethren, "Leave the order of the assembly to the Spirit."

5. Practically, how absurd is this idea! Cannot the Spirit edify as well by truth prepared out of the assembly as in it? What difference does it make whether the Spirit suggested it in the disciple's home or in his place in the assembly? If nothing edifies but what the Spirit imparts during the assembly, how is it that we are edified by the mere reading of what was written at least eighteen centuries ago? Is there no edification in the Evangelical Churches, where the preachers give themselves to "reading, exhortation, doctrine"?

6. The Brethren say that the very choice of speakers rests with the Holy Ghost. Why, then, does Paul blame the Corinthians for a bad choice? And why is human control at all recognized—"The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets"?

7. If the Brethren are under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, why do they employ a hymnbook constructed by man? And why should the Spirit be bound by their three hundred hymns, when the Corinthian disciple had a "psalm" directly given by the Spirit? What is the difference in principle between a pre-arranged hymn and a pre-arranged discourse?

Let us now briefly inquire into the peculiar effects of the Spirit's presidency as illustrated in the assemblies of the Brethren. We should expect to see something far superior to anything experienced by the churches.

Captain Percy Hall, who left the Darbyites some few years ago, speaks with contempt of the idea of what he calls "your little doings" being fathered on the Holy Ghost. Another speaks of "a headless gathering, an any-man ministry, and unarranged devotions." "C. H. M.," a Darbyite leader, asks—"What of our public meetings? Where is their power, unction, freshness, and elevated tone? It is now well known and painfully felt by hundreds that, with few exceptions, the meetings are dull, flat, heavy, and unpopular." (*Thou and Thy House*, p. 22.) Another says: "I remember well the severe punishment inflicted on enlightened Christians by the ministry of those whose

manifest duty was to learn, and not to teach. This, in some instances, used to be endured, till it became intolerable." (*Address to the Plymouth Brethren*, p. 20: 1862.) Mr. Dennett refers to the "Narrative of Facts" by Mr. Darby to prove that, in the case of unacceptable speakers, "private representations are made to induce them to cease." Surely, this was an interference with the presidency of the Spirit! Mr. R. Govett says: "I boldly testify that it would be difficult to find greater deadness and heaviness than I have found in the meetings of those who trumpet forth this, as the only means to attain an edifying assembly and a flourishing church." An ex-clergyman who left the Brethren says: "I thought the Brethren spoke by inspiration, till I heard them misquote Scripture." A Brother, who had a somewhat bitter experience of the Brethren, says: "They pretend to be wholly led by the Holy Spirit, whereas all things are arranged beforehand—who shall lecture, who shall pray, who shall give out hymns." The Rev. F. Whitfield, who had twelve years' experience of the Brethren, refers to a well-known case of several Brethren being put down by a conspiracy to silence them: "Every time these several Brethren I have mentioned got up to speak or pray, there was a general coughing and scraping of feet, some leaving the room, the majority refusing to kneel."

These are but a few illustrations, out of many that I could quote, as to the order maintained in assemblies that assume to themselves the peculiar guidance of the Spirit.

CHAPTER III.

WHO HAVE THE CALL TO PREACH?

THE question of gifts brings us naturally to the question, Who have the call to preach? The Brethren hold that this call belongs to all gifted persons, if not to all saints. They hold that our Lord originally gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, and that, of these, only evangelists, pastors and teachers now survive. Yet, practically, they make all Christians evangelists, pastors or teachers, so that the same Christians are by turns teacher and taught, unlike the order of apostolic times. They hold that elders or bishops passed away with the age of the apostles, and that it is presumptuous in the churches now to ordain elders, inasmuch as elders could only be appointed by apostles or by the delegates of apostles. There are now no apostles to appoint them: there can therefore be no elders.*

The Brethren ridicule the idea of a Christian asking the license or permission of a church to tell a sinner the way of salvation. Let it be understood that there is no dispute between us as to the right of Christians to teach and

* "These were the ministrations: the first two [apostles and prophets] being, in their primary sense, the foundations—extraordinary; the last three [evangelists, pastors and teachers] the ordinary abiding ministration of the churches, to build them up in Christ's known and thus ministered fulness" (Mr. Darby, in *Gifts of the Spirit, etc.*, p. 11). He holds, too, that apostles and prophets, in an inferior sense, still exist. As if a thing could be changed or different, and yet still be the same!

Mr. Macintosh says: "We believe that the great Head of the Church received in resurrection gifts for His Church. He, and not the Church, or any section of the Church, is the reservoir of gifts. They are vested in Him, and not in the Church." [We admit all this.] "We believe that when He imparts a gift, the man who receives that gift is responsible to exercise the same, whether as an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher, quite independently of all human authority."—*Sabbath, Law and Ministry*, p. 13.

admonish one another, as the saints were commanded at Thessalonica,—where, by the way, a regular ministry was established (1 Thess. v. 11—14),—nor as to the right of saints in their own sphere to tell sinners of the way of salvation. We simply deny that the call to ministry belongs to all saints.

1. We refer to Ephesians iv. 11: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints." The Brethren quote the seventh verse to prove a ministry of all the saints: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (1) They seem to forget, however, that the eleventh verse tells us exactly how these gifts of the Lord are distributed; and Paul's question to the Corinthians comes in here most appropriately—"Are *all* apostles? Are *all* prophets? Are *all* teachers?" (1 Cor. xii. 29). (2) Now, if private persons—that is, gifted saints—had been sufficient in apostolic times for propagating Christianity and instructing the Church, why did our Lord appoint *ordinary* officers at all, such as pastors and teachers? For the pastors and teachers, both at Ephesus and in Corinth, were distinct from the prophetically gifted persons in both churches.* Private persons, no matter how gifted, were not allowed to take the place of apostles and prophets at Corinth, and therefore not of pastors and teachers. If they could not take the place of the one, they could not take the place of the other. Now, if ministry was to belong to all believers after the apostles' days, why should they not have started with that principle from the very first? Why should the Lord appoint a ministry of pastors and teachers for the first generation, and make no similar provision for all future generations?

2. If all Christians have a right to preach the gospel, why

* The Brethren claim to have pastors and teachers, but they are not really distinct from the saints to whom they minister; but the Corinthian saints of 1 Corinthians xiv., on whose practice they base all that is peculiar in their assemblies, were *not* pastors and teachers: "Are all teachers?" Pastors and teachers, as the particle τε shows, represent two aspects of one and the same office (Eph. iv. 11). In this passage Paul distinguishes between prophets and teachers, and between evangelists and teachers. It is a significant fact that there is not a passage in Scripture where an ordinary pastor is said to prophesy.

should there have been an order of evangelists whose special duty was to do this very thing? And why should Paul say to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist," when it was every Christian's duty to do the very same? The Brethren tell us that Christians now preach the gospel on their own individual responsibility. Why, even apostles did not dare to do this, for Saul and Barnabas were set apart to this very work at Antioch. Why, forsooth, should Saul or Barnabas ask for leave or authority or recognition from the Church, to make known the gospel to sinners?

3. Why, again, should a Christian desire the office of a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 1), who was to be "apt to teach," when, if he had gifts, he did not need the office at all? He could discharge all its duties without being a bishop or elder.

4. If all Christians have the right to preach, why should Timothy or Titus interfere to test their fitness for the work, when there is no such testing needed now? No Brother would allow himself to be tested in this manner. Why, again, if Timothy possessed the right that belongs to all Christians, should he have allowed the presbytery to interfere, or even an apostle to give him authority to do what he had all along a sufficient right to do without the interference of one or other? If, again, all Christians have a right to preach, why should Paul appoint elders at all, especially when teaching was even a more prominent part of their work than ruling? Why did he instruct Timothy and Titus so carefully about the appointment of elders? The candidates for eldership were either qualified or unqualified. In the one case, ordination followed; in the other, not. But if they were qualified, why ordain? If not, a test is applied and acknowledged. Why should there have been this restriction upon the right of every Christian to preach—this attempt, on the part of man, to test God's servant and his fitness for serving Him?

But we must now examine the Scripture evidence adduced by the Brethren in favour of their views.

1. 1 Corinthians xiv. 31: "Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted." "Here," say the Brethren, "there is not a hint of a one-man ministry." We reply—(1) This passage proves nothing unless the

Brethren can show they possess supernatural gifts. Prophecy in Scripture always means an inspired declaration of truth or of future events. The Brethren themselves admit that the prophets are passed away as well as the apostles. (2) The passage refers, not to all the Corinthian saints—for Paul asks elsewhere, "are all prophets?"—but to *the prophets* among them: "Let the prophets," he says, "speak two or three" (verse 29)—evidently implying the existence of a distinct body of prophets in the Church. The Brethren deny that the gift of prophecy was supernatural, on the ground that the apostle exhorts the saints generally to desire it. But this they might well do in an age of extraordinary gifts, and pray to God for it, as the apostle exhorts him "that speaketh in an unknown tongue to pray that he may interpret." "But was not prophesying for the edification of the Church? Was it not then mere ordinary preaching?" But all the extraordinary officers—apostles and prophets—were alike "for the edification of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11). (3) It is a significant fact that the Corinthian epistle was written *ten* years before the first epistle to Timothy, which sets forth the duties of the eldership; so that the Brethren have no ground for their mere assumption that the Corinthian epistle was to fix the normal character of the ministry to the end of time. The epistle to Timothy shows a one-man ministry in existence. The Brethren say there was no one-man ministry in the days of the apostles, because no elders are spoken of at Corinth, and because the epistle was not addressed to elders, but simply to the church. (1) We shall prove, by-and-by, that pastors or teachers and elders are the same office, and as there were "teachers" at Corinth (1 Cor. xii. 29), there must have been elders. (2) Paul addressed the elders or bishops at Philippi; but he did not address the elders at Ephesus, though there were elders there (Acts xx. 17, 28), or the elders among the Hebrews, though they had elders (Heb. xiii. 7, 17). But Peter specially addresses the elders in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, including, no doubt, hundreds of churches. (1 Peter i. 1.)*

* Of the thirteen or fourteen epistles of Paul, one is addressed to Titus at Crete, two to Timothy at Ephesus, and one to the church of

2. Romans xii. 6—8: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." We may take, with this passage, 1 Corinthians xii. 7—10, where Paul, after naming the gifts of the Spirit, represents the variety of gifts in the Church by the variety of members—eyes, ears, hands, feet—in the human body. The Brethren draw the inference from these two passages that all members of Christ's body have the right of ministry—that is, of preaching the Gospel. (1) We reply that the apostle imposes an express limitation: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" "God hath set *some* in the Church—(not *all*)—first, apostles." (2) The Brethren vitiate the whole analogy, for they make the Church all eye, all ear, or rather all *tongue.* They make it to be one member, not many; whereas the force of the analogy lies in the diversity of gifts—some teaching, some ruling, some giving, some comforting. But the apostle says expressly in Romans xii. 4, "All members have not the same office" (πρᾶξιν)—that is, every member cannot discharge the office of each particular member of the body. The eye cannot hear for the ear, or walk for the legs, or smell for the nose.

3. 1 Peter iv. 10, 11: "As each man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability that God giveth." (1) This cannot prove every man's right to "speak" any more than it can prove every man's right to "minister"—that is, to take the deacon's place and keep charge of the funds. (2) The wording of the passage—"*If* any man"—shows that every

Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; while seven other epistles are addressed to the "angels," or ministers, of the seven churches of Asia, where there did undoubtedly exist that very one-man ministry which Brethren call "a sinful usurpation," and "a daring encroachment on the authority of the Holy Ghost."

man did not, as a matter of course, speak. (3) This epistle was written to churches with elders, whose duty was to "feed the flock of God" and "take the oversight thereof." Therefore, full provision was already made for the churches' instruction. (4) Even suppose the gifts were universal, they were to be exercised by every believer in his own sphere; and as females are included in the injunction, and are forbidden to preach publicly, there is nothing to exclude all believers from labouring in the gospel in a private way, like the Priscillas and Tryphosas of New Testament times.

4. Acts viii. 1, 4, 11, 19.—Great stress is laid on the account here given of private Christians at Jerusalem, who had been scattered abroad, going everywhere to preach the Word. The passage is: "And at that time" (*lit.* on that day) "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." Even if these were private Christians, there was nothing to prevent the apostles from giving them a commission on their sudden departure; but even without such a commission, their call might be regarded as extraordinary from the remarkable effects of their ministry. If a similar crisis should occur to-day, we should not for a moment call in question similar conduct. But let us look at the facts. (1) The "all" who were scattered abroad were all the teachers or all the Christians at Jerusalem, except the apostles. Not all the Christians, for they are there still in the third verse: "He made havoc of the church; entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison." It is not said "*the Church* was scattered abroad." If it had been, the apostles would have had no flocks. Where could they have been entertained, and where could they hide where private Christians could not? (2) The persecution may not have lasted beyond the day of Stephen's death—"on that day there was a great persecution,"—and it was not of a character to cause the flight of private Christians, but of preachers, like Stephen. No blood was shed in it but Stephen's. It was not, therefore, a persecution so serious as to cause a general dispersion. (3) As there were

elders at Jerusalem, and none but apostles remained, it is clear that elders were of those who were dispersed. It is significant that the words εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν λογον are never used in the New Testament but of preachers in office. It is further significant that the only individual of this scattered band at all mentioned is Philip, a deacon, and afterwards an evangelist. If the dispersed were private Christians, why did they not return home after the persecution? But we are told that they went on from country to country, just like our missionaries. We hold, then, that the dispersed were preachers, and the very exception, in the case of the apostles, is so stated as to suggest the fact.

5. 1 Corinthians xvi. 15: "Ye know the house of Stephanas that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." (1) Were they a whole household of preachers? Very unlikely. (2) Their ministry had nothing to do with preaching, but with supplying temporal wants. Exactly the same Greek words occur in 2 Corinthians viii. 4, where "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" refers to Gentile gifts sent to Christian Jews at Jerusalem. Brethren also quote the case of Archippus (Col. iv. 17): "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." This rather proves our case. He *received* his ministry. Paul alludes to this reception as a reason for Archippus fulfilling it. That was the age when the apostle was instructing Timothy and Titus to "lay hands suddenly on no man," and to commit the gospel "to faithful men." Archippus was not, therefore, self-appointed.

It is evident, then, that all Christians, or all gifted persons, have not the right to preach the gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MINISTRY OF BISHOPS OR ELDERS.

THE question has been often asked, and never answered by the Brethren, Why should the apostle have given to Timothy and Titus such minute instructions regarding the qualifications and duties of bishops and deacons, two classes of officers who were immediately to pass away, while we have no instructions given to "pastors and teachers," who, say the Brethren, were to continue till the end of time? Was that matchless picture of the bishop (1 Tim. iii.) to have a mere antiquarian interest to all succeeding ages? Yet that epistle was written in the last year of the apostle's life—ten years, remember, after the first Corinthian epistle, with its fourteenth chapter—and there is not a hint in the whole epistle that the elders were a mere temporary order destined to disappear within a single generation! The apostle tells a very different story, for he commands Timothy to keep the whole series of apostolic commands till—"the appearance of Christ." (1 Tim. vi. 14.) But some Brethren, while admitting that the apostle did set up an order of ministry in the first epistle, say that he saw fit to abolish it in the second epistle to Timothy, where, they say, there is not a word about bishops and deacons, but of committing the word to "faithful men"—that is, laymen—who were to be "able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2). The ground upon which they base this rationalistic idea is, that the Church had become so corrupted through the ministry that the apostle thought it better to have done with elders altogether.* We reply—(1) there is the best possible evidence

* One Brother says: "Our Lord foresaw the divisions of the Church, and wisely forbore perpetuating an appointment which would be practi-

that the two epistles to Timothy were written within seven or eight months of each other, in the very last year of Paul's life.* There was therefore no time for such a development of corruption as the Brethren plead for. Besides, the corruption had set in, as Mr. F. Patterson says, soon after Stephen's death. Why, then, should Paul and Barnabas have ordained elders in every city? Why should Timothy and Titus have received orders to ordain elders at Ephesus and Crete? Would it not have been a wiser plan for Paul, taking the advice of Brethren, to have dispensed with elders altogether? Strange that there is not a reference to the election of an elder till *after* the failure had set in!† (2) It is quite gratuitous to say that the "faithful men" in the second epistle were laymen; for, on the Brethren's principles, the saints, as such, have the right to preach without authority from apostle or evangelist. The phrase "able to teach" is very suggestive of "apt to teach," in the first epistle, applied to bishops. (3) Is it not an impeachment of Paul's inspiration—nay, a profane arraignment of Divine Omniscience—

cally null and void through the wilfulness of man" (Davis, *Helps and Inquiries*, p. 56). What profanity! If our Lord foresaw the divisions, why did He appoint a ministry at all? Were there no divisions at Corinth, where, say the Brethren, the one-man ministry had no existence? But the Brethren are not agreed upon this point. A Brother says the Lord withdrew elders after they had served their purpose in a somewhat exceptional age. He says: "I confess I cannot but admire the perfection of Divine intelligence, first in giving elders, and then, having served their purpose, withdrawing them" (*Enquiry as to the Scriptural Position of the Plymouth Brethren*, p. 34, Morrish). Dr. Davis says, on the contrary, the elders did not serve their purpose, for they corrupted the Church and helped to develop the apostacy of the dispensation!

* Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 829. As the epistle to Titus, according to the best authorities, was written between the two epistles to Timothy, the period is still farther narrowed. We know that the apostle had no change of view as to elders between his writing 1 Timothy and Titus, for the latter is full of instructions about elders.

† The state of things was much the same in both epistles. (1 Tim. i. 20, iv. 1—3, v. 24, vi. 3—5, compared with 2 Tim. ii. 17—21, iii. 1—9.) But why imply that there was no corruption at work in the time of 1 Timothy? It began at Corinth *ten* years before 1 Timothy was written.

that the apostle should be regarded as setting up in one epistle what he was obliged to pull down in another? The Brethren are as bad as the Rationalists. It would be better, indeed, with Baur, to deny the authenticity of the pastoral epistles altogether.

We shall now discuss the claims of the elders, or bishops, as a permanent order of ministers in the Church. The Brethren affirm that pastors and teachers abide still as Christ's gifts in the Church, but that the elders have passed away; that *they* were a distinct class from pastors and teachers, and were not even appointed in all the churches in apostolic times; and further, that the elders, unlike pastors and teachers, were appointed by apostles or by delegates sent by the apostles. It follows, therefore, as there are no apostles now in existence, there can be no elders.

Now, it is evident, on their own principles, that all our churches have pastors and teachers, as well as themselves; for they cannot deny that Christ's gifts are common to all the churches. The only essential difference is that we ordain or appoint, and they do not.

I. *We shall first prove that all the "pastors and teachers" of apostolic times were elders.* (1) The Brethren say that Ephesians iv. 11, which is the charter of the Church's ministry, speaks of five classes of officers, including "pastors and teachers," but says not a word about elders. The reason is that the pastors and teachers were elders. Were there not elders at Ephesus whom Paul met at Miletus? (Acts xx. 17, 28.) There were elders, then, in the very church to which this epistle was written. The Brethren quote the words "Feed the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops," as if to show the absence of human appointment. But is it not the favourite argument of the Brethren that elders were the only class of officers ordained by the apostles? (2) If elders and pastors are distinct, how is it, though we read of elders in the Acts and in the Epistles again and again, that we never read of "pastors and teachers"?* The explanation is easy. The elders were pastors and teachers. We read of apostles and elders at

* The only exception is Acts xiii. 1, where we read of prophets and teachers at Antioch.

Jerusalem: not a word of teachers. So it is everywhere. We read of apostles, prophets, evangelists, *and elders;* but not a word of pastors and teachers. (3) The elders were both teachers and rulers or pastors: 1 Timothy v. 17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine"; 1 Peter v. 1, "The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder—feed (ποιμαίνετε) the flock of God"—the very words of Paul to the Ephesian elders, "Act as ποίμενες, shepherds or pastors." 1 Timothy iii. 2.—The bishop or elder was to be "apt to teach," because he was a teacher, and was to rule well his own house, as a sign that he could take care of the Church of God. (4) If elders are not pastors, why do Brethren refer to 1 Timothy iii. as setting forth the qualifications of pastors? Are they not inconsistent in their practice?

II. *We maintain that elders were ordained in all the churches.* The Brethren say otherwise: "The command to ordain elders only embraced the district of Asia Minor and other places included in the evangelistic tour of Barnabas and Saul, and in the island of Crete by Titus. These were the only places, so far as recorded, to whom elders were given. The ordination of elders was not so extensively done as is generally supposed." * This is an extraordinary statement. (1) The argument from silence proves nothing. Brethren believe there were pastors and teachers everywhere; yet are they not mentioned in every epistle. So the argument cuts both ways. (2) If there were elders in all Asia Minor, which contained the vast majority of the churches, and also in Crete, which is in Europe, and also in all the places of the "dispersion," where Jews were scattered abroad—that is, in Europe and Africa, as well as Asia, for James speaks of elders in the epistle addressed to those in the dispersion (James v. 14),—then elders were, practically, everywhere. (3) Brethren speak of elders as unnecessary in some places. But if elders were needed at Jerusalem, where apostles were present, surely they were

* *An Enquiry as to the Scriptural Position of the Plymouth Brethren so-called*, p. 63.

much more necessary where there were no apostles: and were they not just as necessary in Europe as in Asia Minor? (4) Why, above all, do Brethren try to undervalue a body of officers appointed, as they seem to hint, by their own favourite apostle, Paul?

III. *We consider next the appointment of elders.* The Brethren maintain that Scripture says nothing of the election of elders by a congregation. We reply:—

1. The New Testament history shows *the intervention of the Church* in all matters affecting the welfare of the Church. *The Church is never ignored* in the matter of appointments.

(1) Acts i.—We see here that even an apostle could not be appointed, as successor to Judas Iscariot, *without the recognition of the Church.* The people, in this case, appointed two persons, antecedently to God's choice. One of the two, Matthias, was selected by lot; and then, as if to acknowledge the right and liberty of the Church, he was "reckoned *by suffrage* among the apostles." Συνκατεψίσθη, the Greek word here used, is not the usual one to express the word "numbered" in our authorised version. It refers to the suffrage or votes already taken, as recorded, by the one hundred and twenty disciples. Why, indeed, should the Church have anything to do with the election, or even the recognition, of an apostle? Now, if the Church's right was recognised in the case of an extraordinary officer, surely, *à fortiori*, we may expect it to be equally recognised in the case of ordinary ministers. But as all apostles were elders, as we shall presently see, it was right that the Lord should recognise the interference of the Church in their election.

(2) Acts vi.—The people chose seven persons to act as deacons, but the apostles "when they had prayed laid their hands on them." The Brethren say this was no spiritual appointment, like that of elders, but a mere financial arrangement, in which the choice of the men who were to distribute the funds was properly placed in the hands of those who supplied them. We reply: (*a*) The previous precedent, that of Matthias, was spiritual; (*b*) If there was nothing more here than the appointment of a committee of finance, why was it necessary that the apostles should lay hands on

them—that is, do what they did afterwards in the case of elders? Why should the same ceremony be observed in the two cases? Do the Brethren lay hands on those of their number who manage the finances of their churches? And if not, why not?

(3) It is a significant fact that Judas and Silas were chosen with consent of the whole Church to an extraordinary embassy. Acts xv. 22: "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, *with the whole Church*, to send chosen men." Were not the apostles able to select deputies themselves? Why should "the whole Church" be recognized at all? Remember, the embassy was wholly spiritual, not temporal. Again, Paul's company was chosen by the Church (2 Cor. viii. 19). Also, the commissioners of the church of Corinth were approved by the Church (1 Cor. xvi. 3). The principle is always the same. *The Church is never ignored.*

(4) Let us now consider the case of the elders, in the light of so many clear precedents. Acts xiv. 23: "And when they had *ordained* them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed." The Greek word here translated "ordain" is not the word usually employed in Scripture to express the act of ordination. If simple ordination had been meant, Luke would have used the word καθίστανω (as Acts vi. 3, Titus i. 5), or Επέθηκαν τας χειρας (as Acts vi. 6). But he uses χειροτονήσαντες, which means to choose by votes or to appoint those thus chosen. Paul and Barnabas ordained those whom the Church elected. What previous knowledge could strangers like them have of the qualifications of the candidates for eldership? The Greek word means literally "stretching out the hand." Greek usage is decisive. Chrysostom says that the Roman senate did make gods by most voices (χειροτονειν τους θεους). Ducæus says that heathen writers understand by the word *per suffragia creare.* As for the objection from Acts x. 41—"unto witnesses chosen before of God,"—προχειροτονία is not the same as χειροτονια, but "rather the preventing of χειροτονια by a prior designation."

It is clear, then, that the Church has a right to elect its

own pastors. The Brethren themselves acknowledge this right, while they protest against human authority interfering with the exercise of gifts. Mr. Macintosh says: "A man may say he has a gift on the same principle as he may say he has faith (Jas. ii. 14), and it may be after all only an empty conceit of his own ill-adjusted mind, *which a spiritual assembly could not recognize for a moment.*" Here is the Church's recognition fully admitted.

2. We have now to consider *the ordination of elders.*

The Brethren say that elders were always ordained by apostles or by the delegates of apostles, and as apostles have now ceased, there can be no elders. They say they have pastors and teachers, but *they* receive their commission directly from Christ.

Let it be clearly understood, then, that all our churches regard the title to the office of ministry or eldership as from Christ, and Christ alone. The ordination by the Church conferred, and confers, no right to the office of the ministry. Ordination is only the Church's recognition of the right so conferred by Christ Himself.

We object, however, to the whole doctrine of the Brethren on this point.

(1) We deny that apostles *only* ordained elders; and if we can prove ordination by any but apostles, our case is established. *There is not a case in the New Testament of an apostle ordaining alone.* Is this not strange? Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every city. (Acts xiv. 23.) Barnabas was no apostle, nor did he receive from Paul any authority to ordain. Whatever authority Barnabas had, Paul had in virtue of what had occurred at Antioch. (Acts xiii. 1—3.) Paul got nothing more there than Barnabas. We find likewise Timothy and Titus ordaining elders, and they were not apostles. "But they were delegated by the apostles to do this work." Delegated to do what? To ordain? Certainly not, on the Brethren's principles, if apostles only can ordain. Tell us what was peculiar to an apostle: prophetic power, miracle, inspired declaration of truth. Not one of those had the elders. Apostles could not delegate their office and power; and if you say apostles only could ordain, we say the delegation of ordaining power

to Timothy and Titus is impossible.* Again, if apostles alone could ordain, why should the presbytery or elders have interfered in the ordination of Timothy? What was the meaning of the "laying on of hands"? No doubt the hands of apostles conferred spiritual gifts; but, looking at all the places where this is referred to, it is clear that the laying on of hands was the mode of appointing to office. At Antioch, the prophets and teachers laid hands on Barnabas and Saul. Mark the expression. The Holy Ghost did not separate them Himself to His work, but says, "Separate me Saul and Barnabas." The act of separation was performed by the Church—that is, by the prophets and teachers laying hands on the two. This is the separation Paul refers to in Romans i. 1: "Paul . . . . called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God." (Greek the same.) The call was from Christ; the separation from the Church.† Mr. W. Kelly says the laying on of hands meant simply an act of fellowship. Absurd! Were the deacons not really *appointed* by the laying on of the apostles' hands? And why, if there was nothing but fellowship in the matter, should the apostles *only* have laid hands on the deacons? Had the people no right or desire to show fellowship likewise? And why should the apostle Paul have the elders associated with him in the ordination of Timothy? If the laying on of hands does not mean ordination, then Timothy was never ordained. He never received any appointment. The practice had nothing to do with assent or approbation, but involved the authoritative recognition of office or power. Why do the Brethren not lay hands now on the evangelists they send forth, if nothing more is signified than an act of fellowship? Why do they not maintain the old sign of fellowship?

* If Timothy did ordain, he could not give higher orders than he got, for he was set apart by the hands of the presbytery or eldership. The very elders whom he was to ordain were of the same class as the officers who laid hands on himself. (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 5.) The very ordination, too, that Paul received was that of elders. (Acts xiii. 1—3.)

† It is said this does not accord with Galatians i. 1, where the apostle says he was not an apostle of man nor by man, but by Jesus Christ. It is one thing, however, to be called by man—another to be recognized by man. The one he denies, the other he asserts.

(2) We maintain that if apostles ordained elders, they did it, not as apostles, but as elders. Paul was an elder, just as John and Peter were elders. (2 John 1; 1 Peter v. 1.) The apostle himself carefully distinguishes between his authoritative character as an inspired apostle, and his ordinary character as a weak and fallible minister of the Word: "Whereunto I was ordained (ἐτέθην) a preacher and an apostle" (1 Tim. ii. 7). Is this verb ever used but of the Church's appointment? The reference is to the Antioch proceeding.* (Acts xiii. 1—3.) Even the apostleship is spoken of as an episcopal office. (Acts i. 20, ἐπισκόπη, the same word as in 1 Tim. iii. 1.) A bishop was an elder, as Paul clearly states in his epistles to Titus and Timothy. Remember that apostles and elders met *on equal terms* in the government of the Church. At Jerusalem they legislate side by side on the greatest questions. (Acts xv.) The apostles do not employ their authority as inspired men to stop the controversy at Antioch. The final decree was given in the name of apostles *and* elders: "*We* have written and concluded" (Acts xxi. 1). Peter has to give an account of his ministry to the presbytery at Jerusalem. (Acts xi.) Paul gives them an account of his labours, and receives orders from them, and is ruled by them. (Acts xxi.) The conclusion is evident: the apostles were nothing but elders; as such, they joined in the ordination of elders. We need now no extraordinary officers, therefore, with prophetic gifts or inspired authority, to ordain our elders.

* It is a remarkable fact that Paul is never called an apostle till after the Antioch ordination, though he had been engaged for eight or nine years previously in evangelistic work, as prophet and teacher.

CHAPTER V.

THE PAYMENT OF PASTORS.

THE Brethren hold that it is wrong to pay pastors for their services, however allowable or reasonable it may be to pay evangelists. Dr. Davis says: "I do not know one example in all the New Testament to support the practice of a paid ministry; but as regards itinerant pastors, evangelists and teachers, the principle is plain enough, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."* Another Brother maintains that as the passage in 1 Cor. ix. 14 "could not in any way refer to any duty, except the preaching of the gospel to unbelievers, it does not sustain the payment of pastors."† It is asserted that in Scripture the work of pastors and evangelists is so distinct that the apostles never used both these offices on the same occasion, and that different words are invariably used—προφητεύω to signify preaching to believers, and εναγγελίζω and κηρύσσω preaching to unbelievers — as applicable respectively to the two occasions.

I. We reply—(1) The elder, who was admittedly a resident pastor, was entitled to support: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour (τιμῆς, pay), especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. v. 17). They are here also spoken of as "labourers worthy of their hire." They were not to preach the gospel merely—admitting the Brethren's distinction—but "to labour in the word and doctrine," and "to feed the Church of God" (Acts xx. 28). This is preaching to believers. They were to be "apt to teach"; not to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life; their whole time to be devoted to their pastorship, as completely as the soldier,

* *Christian Ministry*, p. 46. † *Tracts for Believers*, No. 6.

the vine-keeper and the shepherd devoted themselves to their respective callings. (1 Cor. ix. 7.) (2) The apostle says to the Galatian saints, "Let him that is taught in the word (κατηχούμενος, the catechized) communicate with him that teacheth (or catechizeth) in all good things" (Gal. vi. 6). This refers to a stated ministry in a place. Those who were to get the benefit were to support the ministry. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 11). (3) The three illustrations adduced by the apostle to enforce his right to a support—namely, the cases of the soldier, the vine-planter, the shepherd—are cases of persons supported by those who employed them. (1 Cor. ix. 7.) The one is supported by his flock, the other by his grapes, the third by his king. (4) The apostle refers likewise, in proof, to the case of the priests in the Temple, who were all resident, and not itinerant pastors. (ver. 13.) (5) The apostle says: "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister (διακόνιαν) to you" (2 Cor. xi. 8)—that is, in the matter of pastoral care. He insists elsewhere on his right to payment, though for important reasons he declines to receive it. How strange, then, to hear that "there is not an example in all the New Testament to support the practice of a paid ministry"! In fact, there are more texts to support it than to support that of an itinerant ministry.

II. There is no Scripture ground for such a distinction as the Brethren allege between the prophetic or pastoral and the evangelistic offices. The word εναγγελίζω does *not* refer exclusively to preaching the gospel to unbelievers. Paul says—"I am ready to preach the gospel (εναγγελίζασθαι) to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. i. 15). These Romans were believers already. (ver. 7.) He tells the Corinthian saints he "had preached to them the gospel of God freely" (1 Cor. ix. 18, and 2 Cor. xi. 7)—not in reference to his first evangelizing visit, but to his whole intercourse with them, extending over many years. Peter says: "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached (εὐαγγελισθέν) unto you" (1 Peter i. 25). The "word" here (ῥῆμα) means the whole Scripture, as we see by Ephesians

vi. 17 and Romans x. 8, 17, and is therefore applicable to believers as well as unbelievers. The Apocalypse speaks of the glad tidings being declared (εὐηγγέλισε) to "his servants the prophets" (Rev. x. 7). How vain, then, to narrow the signification of the word, as if it implied no message for saints as well as sinners! We must likewise object to the interpretation which makes προφητευω synonymous with preaching to believers. It never means this in the New Testament, but always signifies an inspired revelation, either of something future or secret. How could prophecy be "a sign to believers" (1 Cor. xiv. 22), if it meant only preaching?

It is said, "Prophets are expressly distinguished from evangelists in Ephesians iv. 11." We answer, They are there likewise distinguished from "teachers." Women might be prophetesses, but they were neither to preach nor to teach.

We see, then, that when the apostle declares that "they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel," he does not refer merely to evangelists, for he was himself pastor as well to the Corinthians. He tells them plainly to accept or expect aid from those to whom they are sent. The ministers of our churches, therefore, as filling both offices—for they both "preach the gospel" to sinners and they edify the saints—are fully entitled to support even on Brethrenite principles.

The Brethren say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). (1) But our Lord said also, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." (2) This saying was likewise as applicable to the priests in Old Testament times, yet they had fixed incomes. (3) It is as true of all Christians as of ministers, yet the laity expect payment for their work, and sue for their wages. The Brethren quote our Lord's words, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. x. 8). (1) This refers not to preaching the gospel, but to charisms or miraculous gifts, such as Simon Magus wanted to buy. (2) In the very next verse He tells His disciples to seek their support from those they blessed—"For the workman is worthy of his meat" (ver. 10).

III. The Brethren likewise object to the mode in which pastors are usually paid. They object to fixed salaries, but not to gifts, such as their evangelists receive.

Singular to say, almost all the references in the New Tes-

tament to the support of the ministry represent it as wages or reward, and not as gift. Our Lord says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire (*μισθου*)" (Luke x. 7). Paul took "wages" (*ὀψώνιον*—the very word applied to soldiers' pay in Luke iii. 14, "Be content with your wages")—from other churches (2 Cor. xi. 8), that he might minister to the Corinthians. The three analogical cases of the soldier, the vine-keeper, and the shepherd, are likewise in point. "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges (*ὀψωνίοις*)?" The soldier has his fixed pay: not what the king chooses to give him. You say, "A minister ought to live by faith, not on a fixed income." The minister is not the only man who ought to live by faith. Why does not the baker, or the butcher, or the clothier accept whatever their customers choose to offer them? "But ministers ought to cast themselves on the Lord." So did the seventy; so did the apostle Paul; so did the elders. Yet the Lord provided for them by means of the people's liberality. "But is it right to demand payment for a seat in God's house, as you call your chapels? Will men sell what is God's?" Do the Brethren never sell Bibles? Why do they demand money for God's book?

IV. What is the practice of the Brethren as to the payment of their preachers? Inconsistently enough, they pay those who preach for edification as well as the evangelists. Mr. C. Rust says: "Many Brethren live by faith and find it answer very well,—they have hats, clothes, provisions, luxuries, and £200 a-year, while Paul hungered and fasted, and the poor starving saints at Jerusalem did likewise." The Brethren support their leading preachers, just as the churches support their ministers; yet they take up ground in argument as inconsistent with their own practice as with ours. They plead for the liberty of all believers to teach, but as the payment of all might be inconvenient, they adopt a theory that restricts payment to evangelists. "It is marvellous," says a writer, "with what facility our opinions adapt themselves to circumstances, when we have abandoned the Word as our rule in faith and practice!"

BOOK III.—CHURCH DOCTRINE.

CHAPTER I.

CHRIST'S HEAVENLY HUMANITY.

THE Brethren hold that the humanity of Christ was not that of man, fallen or unfallen, but "the glorified resurrection-humanity of the redeemed."* Dr. Tregelles says the following expressions have been used of Christ's humanity:—that He was man, but not the Son of man, which was only a title; that His humanity was something Divine; that "made of a woman" does not mean "born of a woman"; and that He was not man of the substance of His mother, but of that of God his Father. Mr. Macintosh speaks of "the Divine Man," and of "His heavenly humanity," as though the Holy Ghost had introduced Divine elements into His human nature.

1. We hold that Christ was as truly man as we are, for He was "made of a woman" (Gal. iv. 4). Mr. Kelly says it should be "come of a woman" (*γενόμενον*). Certainly

* Mr. W. Kelly says: "It is all a blunder to suppose that the reality of the incarnation involves the condition of either Adam fallen or unfallen . . . There are thus three distinct phases of humanity here below—innocent, fallen, holy. Christ's manhood was in the condition of Adam neither before nor after the fall."—*Christ Tempted, etc.*, pp. 11, 14.

Mr. Darby says: "As incarnate He abode alone" (*Sufferings of Christ*, p. 77). "We, the Church, are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, now that He is glorified and the saints united to Him who is on high. The thought is a totally different one, and does not refer to His incarnation, but to our union with Him when glorified." (*Ibid.*)

not, if the word is intended to exclude birth. But do Brethren really deny, like the Valentinian heretics, that Jesus had the substance of "His mother"? Remember, it is not said that the Holy Ghost conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, but "*Thou* shalt conceive in thy womb." If she conceived, the child was of her substance.

2. Christ is called the "Son of man," and is therefore one of Adam's sons. He was of the "seed of David," for He was of "those fathers of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." He had their humanity. Mary and Joseph were both of the seed of David.

3. Hebrews ii. 14—"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise (παραπλησίως) took part of the same." Bengel says "likewise" is equivalent to "in all things" (ver. 19). The Docetæ changed the Greek to ὅμοιως, because they felt the force of a word which implied that Christ took flesh and blood the same as man's, sin excepted. The Brethren affirm, however, that Christ is here said to take the flesh and blood of the children—that is, *the sanctified.* Mr. Darby says, "His relation was with the sanctified." Mr. Kelly says, "There is the most careful exclusion of the thought that Christ assumed humanity in the fallen and morally feeble state that it is in us." But how does this distinction help him? Surely the children, sanctified though they be, are still sinful, because they are still in the body. Christ was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh"—not sinless flesh (Rom. viii. 3),—and therefore in the likeness of Adam fallen, in spite of Mr. Kelly. He was born not in Paradise, but in unparadisaical circumstances, which are the consequences of Adam's sin. He voluntarily brought himself under one of them—"the sweat of the brow"—but was He thereby unfitted for atonement?

The Brethren base their doctrine on 1 Corinthians xv. 47: "The first Adam was of the earth, earthy; the second man was from heaven." (Greek.) But this refers to our Lord's person, not to His humanity. Brethren confound the two. It is not said that the Second Man, as to His humanity, was from heaven. "If He assumed relation to fallen man, He could not stand before God in personal acceptance." This

is to say that Christ could not assume relation to fallen man without being Himself a sinner. "He could not be like His brethren in all things, because they are mortal and He was not mortal." Had not Jesus a mortal body? The Brethren say not, because He died voluntarily. But did He not die? Had He an immortal body? If so, then He could not have died, even voluntarily, except by a special miracle. But Hebrews ii. 14, immediately after the reference to "flesh and blood," brings expressly into view one point of resemblance—death: "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death." It is objected: "If He had in His nature a necessity of dying, He could not die meritoriously for others." Who created or imposed this necessity? Himself. If He had been born, as we are, under the imputation of Adam's sin, He could not have become a sacrifice for us.

We reject, therefore, the doctrine of the heavenly humanity. Christ was man as we are; and His humanity was subject to every infirmity which does not imply sin, and every consequence of sin that was not in itself sinful.

CHAPTER II.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE Brethren teach that we are justified, not on the ground of Christ's righteousness, but on the ground of His death and resurrection. They deny that God imputes to believers the righteousness of Christ, but say that God imputes righteousness when He accounts a believer righteous on the ground of Christ's death and resurrection. "Christ crucified and Christ risen was what the Holy Ghost did set before lost sinners: His death for atonement, His resurrection for righteousness or justification." (Stanley.) They deny the vicarious obedience of Christ to the law. They maintain that Christ's sufferings in life, previous to the cross, were not vicarious: that He was not, in fact, a sin-bearer in life: and even that all His sufferings on the cross were not vicarious. They go so far as to hold that even His death was unatoning.

I. "*Justification in the Risen Christ.*"

We shall first consider the view that Christ's death brings merely pardon or negative justification, but that His resurrection brings us "into a state of absolute righteousness in Him risen." Justification is thus made to spring out of Christ's life after resurrection (not from His life before it—that is, His vicarious obedience), as well as His death. Mr. Stanley says, "Nothing but His resurrection can justify," and refers to Romans iv. 25—"Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification"—as proving that "while His precious blood clears from all sin, His resurrection brings me into a state of absolute righteousness in Him risen, and therefore complete justification." (*Justification in the Risen Christ*, p. 4.)

1. This whole theory is based on a mistranslation. The

correct translation is—"who was delivered in consequence of (διὰ with an accusative) our offences, and raised again in consequence of our justification." That is, He would not have died but for our sins: they were the cause of *His* death: and He would not have been raised again if His death had not secured our justification. Our justification or our salvation was complete *when* He died, and His resurrection only declared that it was so.

2. This theory involves the inconsistency that we are righteous before we are justified. Mr. Stanley says: "God cannot justify anything short of righteousness. God is only righteous in justifying me *as a new creature*." This contradicts Romans iv. 5—"God justifieth *the ungodly*." How, then, can He justify me as righteous? No doubt, we shall yet be in a state of absolute righteousness as a result of justification, but this state of absolute righteousness cannot be the *ground* of our justification. This theory also contradicts Romans iii. 24—"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ"—where justification meets us as *sinners*, and not as new creatures, and is based not on His resurrection, but on the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. It also contradicts Romans v. 19—"So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Here it is by His obedience, not by His resurrection, we are justified. It also contradicts Romans v. 9, where we are said to be "justified by His blood." Not a word here of His resurrection!

3. The statement that the cross brings pardon, and nothing more, is opposed to Hebrews x. 10, where it brings sanctification; to Revelation v. 9, where it brings redemption; to Colossians i. 21, 22, where it brings reconciliation and presentation before God; and to Romans v. 9, where justification itself is ascribed to His blood.

4. This theory involves a false idea both of the life of Christ before His resurrection and of His life after it. A Brother says: "In Him our dying Substitute the life once forfeited by us has been given up." Our forfeited life! Surely not, else He must have had a sinful life. Mr. Macintosh says: "Hence, in giving up His life, He gave up

also the sin attached thereto, so that it is effectually put away, having been left in His grave, from which He rose triumphant in the power of a new life, to which righteousness as distinctly attaches itself as did sin to that life which He gave up on the cross" (*Genesis*, p. 64). We reply—(1) That righteousness did just as truly attach to His life before resurrection: else He could not have atoned for us. The victim for sacrifice must be unblemished. (2) It is not true that He took a new life after resurrection, for He says, "I lay down my life that I may take IT again." (3) This theory leaves Christ's life *in the dust.* Something is left in the hands of the enemy. Something is left in the grave. Mr. Darby says, like his friend, "The life is gone to which the sin and its punishment attached." If Christ died in this sense, He ceased from His humanity. Mr. Darby says, "The very nature" in which He wrought the atoning work is gone—"with the life also which He quits in dying." Now, He received a nature from His mother which made Him man and the Son of man; but if Mr. Darby is right, the Man who is now in heaven has neither human nature nor human life. If "He has done with the old thing altogether, and has got into a new one (that very nature left behind in which He was responsible and suffered for sin), and now He is the Heavenly Man in the presence of God," how should it be said that "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens"? (Eph. iv. 10.) Why should Mr. Darby say He is now the Heavenly Man? Was He not the second man from heaven (1 Cor xv. 47) in the very days of His flesh? "No man hath ascended into heaven save He which came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up *where He was before?*" Mr. Darby divides the Person of Christ. Mr. Stanley says: "The atonement required a life not liable to death, and this being delivered up, His life as the Son of God asserts its place." What! was He not the Son of God *before* He died? Surely it was God's own Son that He did not spare! The life Jesus poured out was His soul (ψύχη), not βίος. Mr. Darby goes so far as to say that "In the true essential life of Christ He

never laid down any life at all;" yet Acts viii. 33 declares that his life (ζωὴ) was taken from the earth. What singular boldness of assertion! But this theory gives, likewise, a false view of Christ's risen life: "He transfers, so to speak, the Divine life which was in Him to a new and heavenly sphere where flesh and sin could not come—the resurrection-state." Jesus Himself says: "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18). The living and the dead is here the same; and yet how can this be, if the first life is laid in the grave? Yet it is said "the life is left and gone"! Can it be that our Lord is less by a life in heaven than He was on earth?

5. This theory leads to false views concerning the condition of the justified. "And now, though He could not be righteous in any way in justifying my old man, yet is He everlastingly, gloriously righteous in justifying me as a new creature in Christ risen from the dead." This is absurd. The old man cannot be justified, for it is not a person. Scripture never speaks of the justification either of the "old man" or the "new man." Believers are justified, though the old man is in them still. Mr. Stanley talks wildly when he says of the believer, "As to sin, righteousness, and life, he is in Christ exactly what he will be when the day of the redemption of the body has actually taken place." He speaks, too, of believers *now* as "children of the resurrection,"—a description that Christ expressly limits to the future condition of glory. (Luke xx. 35.) This is sore exaggeration. True, we are representatively in heaven, in Christ our Head; but we are personally and actually here. Sin is still here; we are to watch and fight against it; our life is "hid with Christ," but hereafter it will be fully manifested.

6. This theory, with the prominence that it gives to the union between Christ and believers, gets rid of the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and of substitution likewise. "In this dispensation, when we believe in Him, we are in Him, and the being in Him does not carry the idea of substitution, but of oneness—of union" ("J. M. C.," *Imputed Righteousness*," p. 30). (1) If righteousness is by

union with Christ, and not by imputation, then the Spirit's work is more important than Christ's on the cross. But Brethren hold that Old Testament saints have not this union. How, then, were David and Abraham counted righteous (Rom. iv.)? If they were not *in* Christ, how were they saved? (2) We may get rid of imputed righteousness by this theory; but we may in the same way resolve redemption by His blood into union with Christ. (3) Brethren say Scripture represents believers as *in* Christ, whereas the imputation of Christ's righteousness supposes the believer as standing apart from Him. Then, on the same ground, we must reject the remission of sins, for that supposes the believer as standing apart from Christ.

II. *Christ's obedience to the law for us.*

The righteousness of Christ consists in His obedience to the law for us, as well as in His suffering its penalty in our stead. Brethren deny altogether that Christ obeyed the law for us. They say that the inheritance does not come to us by law at all; that if Christ's obedience is accepted in place of our obedience, there is no need for Christ's death at all, and that the Scriptures nowhere attribute our justification to His obedience to the law, but always to His death.

Let us first give the positive proofs of our doctrine.

It is clearly taught in Romans v. 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made (rather, constituted) sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Here the apostle opposes obedience to disobedience; and as the one was a violation of law, the other must be a keeping of the law. How are we made sinners by Adam's disobedience? By the guilt of that act of eating the forbidden fruit. How are *we* guilty of it? By imputation, for Adam represented all his seed. How, indeed, could we be punished for it, unless the guilt of it were imputed to us? The conclusion is obvious that we are, in a similar way, made righteous by the act of another—Jesus Christ. Paul opposes the righteousness of Christ to the offence of Adam. *Now, Christ's death in itself is never called His righteousness.* Mr. Stanley says on this passage, "It is not said that the obedience is imputed to us, but it is in contrast, as Dr.

Alexander truly says, with Adam's disobedience. The effect of the one was to bring men in sinners, the effect of the other was to bring in righteousness." But *how* was this effected in the two cases? How are we treated as sinners on account of Adam's sin, unless the sin of Adam was imputed to us? Mr. Stanley never touches this question. It is said, again, that our righteousness here consists in one obedience of one man only once performed (that is, in His death)—corresponding to the disobedience of Adam, which was a single act. (1) We reply that one act of disobedience is a violation of a law and makes one unrighteous, but one act of obedience cannot make a man righteous. (2) Adam's disobedience, though a single act, included the breach of the whole moral law, for "he who offendeth in one point is guilty of all." The Brethren say too that the "gift of righteousness" (verse 17) is expressly called "a free gift of many offences unto justification" (verse 16), implying that there is nothing in righteousness but the pardon of sin. But the passage does not say that our righteousness is only free forgiveness, but that in reference to forgiveness there is a gift bestowed with forgiveness for its consequent.

Our doctrine is also clearly taught in 2 Corinthians v. 21: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We do not except the sufferings of Christ from the righteousness here spoken of. Brethren say the righteousness of God here must refer to Christ's death alone, because Jesus was made a sin-offering only on the cross. Therefore the obedience of Christ to law does not here come into account at all. We reply that Christ "made sin" does not mean "made a sin-offering," else the parallel clause will be, "we are made a righteousness-offering." Jesus is made sin, and therefore He is made a sin-offering. But these are not the same thing. The passage lays the foundation for the sacrifice in a prior transaction—"made sin." Justice finds Christ in sin's room, and takes hold on Him. The passage supplies the reason for His being a sacrifice, or for having our sins imputed to Him. The question, after all, is, how Christ could be made sin for us, unless our sins were imputed to Him? So, how could we be made the

righteousness of God, unless His righteousness were imputed to us?

Another proof-text is Romans x. 3, 4: "For they, being ignorant of Christ's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." They did not, forsooth, submit themselves to God's righteousness, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; as if to explain that Christ's righteousness was referred to. What is "the end of the law"? Mr. Stanley says "curse." Surely not: it is obedience. It can only mean that fulfilment which the law demanded till its end was reached, and εἰς ("unto") leaves no doubt that this fulfilment of the law is to be found in Christ alone. Christ "established the law," not merely or only by suffering its penalty, but by obeying it.

Another proof is Galatians iv. 4: "Made of a woman, made under the law." "Yes: but this is no proof that He was made under the law *for us*." Was He not made of a woman *for us?* "To us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isa. ix. 6). He was made of a woman for us, not for Himself. Why add "made under the law," since if He were born of a woman he must have been made under it? But the passage tells us why He was made under the law,—"to redeem them that were under the law." "But," say the Brethren, "He was made under it that He might be a fit mediator." We reply: His obedience was not necessarily required to make His sacrifice holy, for His human nature, being once united to the Divine, could not but be holy, and so a sinless, holy sacrifice. The human nature was holy antecedently to all acts of obedience to the law. He would have been a fit sacrifice, even if He had been offered up in infancy. Therefore obedience was not required to make Him a fit mediator. He was made under the law *for us*.

Other texts in proof of the doctrine are 2 Peter i. 1, where we read of "the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Greek); 1 Corinthians i. 30, where He is called "our righteousness"; Philippians iii. 8, 9, where we read of "the righteousness which is of God by faith," as

opposed to "mine own righteousness"; Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6, where we read of "the Lord our Righteousness"; and Daniel ix. 24, where the bringing in of "an everlasting righteousness" is distinct from "finishing transgression and making an end of sin." Christ was no sinner, yet He submitted to baptism for the remission of sins, that He might, as He said, "fulfil all righteousness."

We shall now consider the arguments of the Brethren against our doctrine.

1. They say that justification is declared in Scripture to be pardon only, and as this comes through the death of Christ, there is no need for His law-fulfilling.

(1) We reply that justification includes more than pardon: it pronounces and accepts a person as righteous. The person so accepted must be righteous; and seeing that he is not so inherently, he must be so by imputation. Brethren admit that to justify is the opposite of to condemn. But condemnation is more than *not* pardoning: it is declaring a person guilty. Therefore, justification must be *more* than pardon.

(2) The Brethren themselves make justification to be more than pardon, for they say it includes also resurrection-life.

It is argued that there is nothing more than pardon in justification, for the imputation of righteousness is said to be equivalent to non-imputing of sin. Romans iv. 4: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (*a*) The imputation of righteousness includes the non-imputation of sin, but is more than *it*. Here the imputation of righteousness is the cause; the non-imputation of sin, the effect. The remission of sins does not make a man righteous. Who ever thought that a pardoned thief was a righteous man, or that his pardon made him righteous or an observer of the

law? In Ephesians i. 7 the whole of redemption is given in "the forgiveness of sins"—"In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Yet there is more in redemption than this: the gift of the Spirit, glorification, eternal life. So the non-imputation of sin represents the leading element in the imputation of righteousness. (*b*) If God pronounce a man righteous because he is pardoned, then he is pardoned before he is justified; and if he is pardoned before he is justified, pardon is not justification.

2. Brethren argue, again, that justification cannot come to us, according to Scripture, in a way of law-fulfilling at all. For Galatians ii. 21 says, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain;" and Romans iii. 21 says that "the righteousness of God is without the law." We reply—(1) It is *our* works the apostle speaks of here, not Christ's. This is clear from Titus iii. 5—"Not by works of righteousness which *we* have done . . . hath He saved us." Mr. Darby says: "If the righteousness imputed to the believer is Christ's fulfilment of the law, it is after all human, legal righteousness, by whomsoever done." Does Mr. Darby consider what he is saying? Paul expressly says that the object of Christ's coming is that "the righteousness of the law"—nothing else, and nothing better—"might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. viii. 3). (2) The works against which Paul disputes are those which do not exclude boasting, but Christ's work *does* exclude it. (3) It is our own works only that are excluded; for, referring to Abraham, the apostle in Romans iv. denies that it was by his own works he was justified. (4) On the Brethren's own principles our justification has to do with law, for they admit that Christ gave a satisfaction to the law in what He suffered. Mr. Stanley says: "I must confess I do not see how God could be righteous in reckoning a breaker of the law righteous because another kept it." If so, then it would be equally unrighteous for God to accept the substitutional sacrifice of Christ in bearing penalties in our stead. This theory would overturn vicariousness in every form.

It is said that eternal life is nowhere promised to the keeping of the law. A Brother says: "The law said, 'Whosoever doeth these things shall live in them'—that

was all. It never even thought of new life—never eternal life, never glory—simply continuance of the life and state it formed. . . . It had no promise of resurrection, of life beyond death, whatever." This means, that in case of perfect obedience to the law, the reward would have been a continuance of life in this world. We reply—(1) That the passage (Romans x. 5) in which the words occur, proves that the reference is to eternal life; for what the law could not do, through the weakness of the flesh, *that very thing* the righteousness of faith accomplished. (2) What shall we make of Christ's replies to the rich young man and the lawyer, when they asked "What shall I do that I may inherit *eternal* life?" (Mark x. 17—19; Luke x. 25—28)? Brethren reply that our Lord only wished to show them the impossibility of "entering into life" in their own way, and that He never speaks of "eternal life" in either place. *They* meant nothing less; Jesus knew they meant that, and not life in this world: are we to suppose that He meant anything else in His answer—"This do and thou shalt live"? If He did not mean this, He did not answer their question. Was our Lord guilty of a wretched quibble? (3) What shall we make of Romans vii. 10: "And the very commandment which was for life (ζώην—Christ is called the life in this sense) I found to be unto death"?

3. It is argued that "the law did not require both death and obedience. Death and obedience are the alternatives of the law; so that a man might choose the one or the other, and in either way the claim of the law would be satisfied." We reply—(1) The Brethren confound the sanction of the law, which is death, with its requirement, which is obedience. Death is not the requirement of the law: it is the penalty of disobedience. (2) "If Christ has rendered to the law an obedience which is accepted in place of my obedience, was there any need for His death at all?" Christ's obedience has been rendered for man, not simply as subject to the law, but as a sinner against the law. No obedience rendered by such a one, and therefore no obedience rendered for him, as Bishop O'Brien shows, could expiate his past guilt. If we had been like Adam in innocence, the obedience would have sufficed without death.

But we are rebels and transgressors: our substitute must therefore suffer as well as obey.

4. But it is asserted that justification, according to Scripture, comes only through Christ's death. We answer—(1) If this be so, then the Brethren are wrong in attributing our justification to Christ's resurrection. (2) If Scripture speaks of Christ being our righteousness in other respects besides His death, it is arguing to no purpose to quote those texts which attribute our justification to His death. The argument would be effective if we denied the remission of sins by His death, and held that it came to us only by His obedience. Our justification may be ascribed to His death, not as excluding His obedience, because death was the completing act of His obedience. Where are Christ's sufferings ever called a righteousness? (3) We are expressly said to be saved by His *life* (Rom. v. 10), as well as by His blood (v. 9). (4) If nothing but His death is imputed, there can be no righteousness imputed, for dying or suffering the penalty is no righteousness—else a hanged murderer is righteous and has obeyed the law, because he has been hanged. Surely those suffering in hell are not fulfilling the law.

III. *The righteousness of Christ, fulfilled in His obedience and suffering, is the righteousness of God, and becomes the possession of believers through imputation.*

The Brethren deny this position, and hold that the righteousness of God is simply, as Mr. Darby puts it, "the quality or character that is in God Himself," and that "we are justified by His grace through *redemption*, and that righteousness is declared in remission." Mr. Kelly says: "The evident scope of the righteousness of God is that He Himself is righteous in justifying the believer by virtue of Christ's work in all its extent and blessedness." (1) The righteousness of God cannot refer to the Divine attribute of righteousness, because the act is one of grace, not of justice. (2) It could not be properly said that Christians are made the very "righteousness of God" (2 Cor. v. 21)—a Divine attribute. (3) It is called a "gift of righteousness." The idea is always that of a provision made for those without a righteousness of their own. It is said that Scripture does not speak of "the righteousness of Christ," but of "the

righteousness of God." But if this were so, the fact would make the vicarious character of the righteousness more evident. Christ Himself is our righteousness. We are all that Christ is: we "are the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). But Peter speaks expressly of the "righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter i. 2).

Brethren deny imputation by perverting its Scripture meaning. Mr. Darby says: "It is an act of the mind accounting the person something at the moment the act of the mind takes place." Not a very clear or happy definition! Mr. Darby says further: "But when I say, God imputed his faith to Abraham for righteousness, it is plain that He held Abraham to be righteous on account of faith,—that is, imputing righteousness means, in Scripture, to hold a person to be a righteous man, to reckon or account him such." We reply, that the word "impute" means either to attribute to another what is properly his own, or to denote the ascription to us of what is *not* our own, as when we speak of the sin of Adam, or the righteousness of Christ. There is a difference between λογίζομαι and λογίζομαι εἰς. The latter form is used to denote the assigning to a thing a value which intrinsically it has not. Thus in Romans ii.—"Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for (εἰς) circumcision?" and in Romans iv.—"His faith is counted for (εἰς) righteousness": that is, faith has only an assigned value, like a bank-note, and Christ's righteousness, which it represents, has an absolute value. Thus, faith is imputed to me *for* righteousness —that I may become righteous—but Christ's righteousness is imputed to me *as* righteousness. Faith cannot be righteousness: for, first, it would then be regarded as a work, while it is contrasted with works—"To him that worketh not, but believeth." Secondly, my righteousness is imperfect, if my faith is righteousness, for that is never perfect. Faith imputed *for* righteousness is the doctrine of Romans iv., but Christ's righteousness imputed *as* righteousness is that of Romans v., where it stands forth in all its breadth—"As by the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be constituted righteous." It is not on the ground that all are corrupt, but that all sinned, that death passed upon all: "Where-

fore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death penetrated unto all men on the ground that all sinned" (Rom. v. 12)—not on the ground that all have been *made corrupt*. As death reaches us on the ground of one man's sin, so life on the ground of one Man's righteousness. If we hold that the one came by the corruption of our nature, then we must say we are constituted righteous by *infused righteousness*—the doctrine of the Church of Rome.

IV. *Christ is our Sin-bearer through all His life.*

We shall now consider the heresies of Brethren concerning Christ's sufferings and death. We believe that Christ's righteousness consists of His suffering as well as His obedience. The Brethren limit His vicarious suffering to the cross, and deny that He was a sin-bearer at all during His life. His sufferings through life, they say, came from the hands of men, and not from the hands of God, and were not, therefore, "satisfactory" or vicarious. The orthodox doctrine is that all Christ's sufferings were "satisfactory," not in the sense that there could be atonement apart from death, but that all His sufferings came on Him as "the Lamb."

The Brethren argue that He was sin-bearer only on the cross, because, on the supposition of His being sin-bearer in life, He must always have borne the same weight of damnatory wrath that He bore on the cross; in which case the Father would not have sent angels to comfort Him, and heaven would not have opened over His head. They say He never suffered under the hand of God *till the cross*, and Christ, though treated as of sin, could never be regarded as sin, and could never stand in the actual relation of a sinner to God.

1. We answer, that Christ neither in life nor death stood in the actual relation of men to God. Man's actual relation to God was one of personal guilt and personal curse. Not so with Christ. Even on the cross, He was an object of the Father's love and delight. If He had not been this, He could not have been "an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour."

2. John i. 29: "Behold the Lamb of God, that beareth

(αἴρων) the sin of the world."—This proves that He was the Lamb, and was the bearer of sin, three years at least before His death. If the Greek word is translated "taketh away," it still means "taketh away by bearing it."

3. He is to appear "without sin" at His second coming. This implies that during the whole of His humiliation, he was never without it. (Heb. ix. 28.)

4. God sent Him "*in the likeness of sinful flesh*," and "FOR SIN" (Rom. viii. 3). That is, He was *for sin* from the day He took on Him the likeness of sinful flesh.

5. "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). This refers to His baptism. Why should the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins be necessary for the sinless Christ?

6. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John xii. 27). This was not in Gethsemane, but on the day of His public entrance into Jerusalem. He reverts here to the vicarious suffering as the design of His coming into the world.

7. What of the agony of Gethsemane? Did He not bear sin in the garden?

8. "Surely He hath borne *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4). That is, He suffered all the pains and sorrows due to us for sin. Few of the descriptions of this chapter are to be restricted to the sufferings of the cross.

9. Of nearly fifty Psalms, quoted in the New Testament, the references are to Christ's sufferings *in life*.

10. "Who His own self carried our sins in his own body *to* the tree"—to present them for judgment (1 Peter ii. 24). The authorised version, "bare our sins on the tree," is wrong; for the Greek would then be ὑπήνεγκεν ἐπὶ τόυ ξύλου; whereas it is ανήνεγκεν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον. The word ανηνεγκεν is a sacrificial word, and is used ten times in the New Testament for "bringing up" or "carrying up," never for "bearing." If, then, our Lord carried our sins to the tree, they must have been *on* Him before He did so.

The Brethren maintain, however, that all Christ's living sufferings flowed from the perfectness of His sympathies, or from the persecutions of His enemies, but they were not

sufferings under the hand of God. We ask—(1) Was He not always the Lamb of God? (2) Were not all His sufferings preordained of God, and must they not have come from God? If He suffered hunger, thirst, weariness, and other signs of an unparadisaical state, surely such things were the results of God's governmental arrangements; and in suffering them, He suffered as truly under the hand of God as on the cross. (3) Gethsemane was a scene of suffering pre-eminently appointed of God, yet Gethsemane was not the cross. Christ suffered in many things with His people while suffering for them. The fact that He who deserved blessing suffered, proves that He suffered only as surety.

V. *Third-class sufferings of Christ on the cross.*

The Brethren have broached a recent heresy to the effect that Christ was a sin-bearer only during the last three of the six hours of His suffering on the cross—namely, the hours of darkness. One class of His sufferings was at the hands of men; another class was borne for the sake of a certain Jewish remnant that is to appear in the latter day on earth. These two classes of sufferings are not, according to the Brethren, vicarious or atoning. His sufferings at the hand of God are alone of this character. This latest heresy of Brethrenism led to many of its leading teachers withdrawing from Darbyism.

This new truth, as it is called, is drawn from a peculiar interpretation of the Psalms, and especially of the sixty-ninth.

The theory is this: that atonement was wrought wholly by "the drinking of the cup," when Christ was forsaken of God, but that "smiting" (Psalm lxix.) does not refer to atonement at all. The smiting and the cutting off—which is death—are said not to be atoning.* Mr. Darby contrasts Psalm xxii. with Psalm lxix., and says that in the former Christ stands alone, and therefore His sufferings

* Mr. Darby says: "I do not find that smiting is ever used for atonement (though atonement also was wrought when He was smitten), but for the cutting off of Messiah in connection with the Jews. Forsaking of His God is that which in Scripture expresses that work which stands wholly alone."—*Sufferings of Christ.*

"They take advantage of God's hand upon the sorrowing One to add to His burden and grief. This is not atonement, but there is 'sin' and

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work atonement; while in the latter others are associated with Him (ver. 26), and therefore the suffering cannot be atoning.

1. We ask, was the righteous God punishing His righteous Son unrighteously? This He did, if He smote Him not as a substitute. If Christ was smitten of God and cut off, but not in atonement, did He deserve it or not? If not, where is God's righteousness? If He did, where is Christ's perfectness? If all this be true, how is man to be saved? And why should Christ suffer for Israel's apostacy—an apostacy against which He protested and entreated, and in which He had no share? Christ is killed by God in connection with apostates! And not in atonement!

2. It is argued that because He suffered with others, His sufferings cannot be atoning, as theirs are not atoning. What an idea! Christ and the two thieves suffered the same death. Surely Christ's death was vicarious, and theirs was not.

3. It is said Christ had "distress from sense of sin," not in connection with the work of expiation. In that case He would be disqualified for being our propitiation. He confesses foolishness and sin in Psalm lxix.; but it is done vicariously.

4. Did the apostles ever teach that Christ endured sorrow and smiting from God, and then add, "This is not atonement"? Did they ever say that, though Christ was "meeting indignation and wrath, He was not yet drinking the cup"—the cup of atoning judgment for our sins? Mr. Darby admits that the doctrine is only to be found in the Psalms. Is this not strange? No apostle ever said, as the Brethren now do, "The Lord Jesus Christ has done you a kindness in the three hours of darkness."

VI. *The Death of Christ unatoning.*

The Brethren further teach that it is not the death of Christ, but His drinking the cup of wrath, that is really

'smiting from God.' Hence we find the sense of sin also (Psalm lxix. 5), though, of course, in the case of Christ, they were not His own personally, but the nation's—in a certain sense we may say ours, but specially the nation's sin. But we have clear proof that they are not atoning sufferings."—*Sufferings of Christ*, pp. 71, 72.

atoning. Mr. Darby says: "Now, that which was properly expiation or atonement was not the pure, however precious, act of Christ's death. Of course death was necessary for this, as for other objects in the counsels of God; but it is what Jesus went through from and with God, when made sin—it is what He suffered for our sins, not only in body but in soul, under Divine wrath, that the atonement depends on. *Many besides Jesus have been crucified*, but atonement was in no way wrought there."—*Bible Treasury*, September, 1866, p. 137.

Thus the Brethren separate His sufferings from His death. They assign atonement to the sufferings, and deny it to the death, though we are expressly said to be "reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

1. The cross was the means of Christ's death: "He made peace through the blood of His cross." Yet a Brother says, "The cross in itself would not take away sin."

2. Christ's bearing the curse of the law was death. He "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13). Yet a Brother says, "The thieves bore it as He did"—as if to prove that there is no atonement here. Paul expressly attributes our redemption to His hanging on a tree.

3. It is said, "That which was properly expiation or atonement was not the pure, however precious, act of Christ's death." This heresy is based on a certain interpretation of the Psalms. But the question arises, Why did not the apostles teach us this doctrine? They had these very Psalms, and were able to understand their application to Christ as well as Mr. Darby. Yet they always persist in representing Christ's death as atoning.

4. In opposition to the idea of an unatoning death, Christ says: "I lay down my LIFE for the sheep." Surely this implies an atoning death.

5. Brethren say the atonement is not in the sufferings inflicted upon Christ at the hands of men. We reply, the Scriptures take little account of agency, and make much of the fact itself. It was men who "with wicked hands" slew Him (Acts iii. 13—18); but Peter says, "But those

things which God before had showed by the mouth of His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." How? By human agency. This explodes the idea that the sufferings on the cross, inflicted by the hands of men, are to be distinguished from those directly from God's hand, in order to show that the one was atoning and the other not.

6. According to this theory, if Christ had left the cross, after passing through the desertion and the darkness, *without dying*, there would have been atonement.

VII. *Justification in its relation to our future sins.*

The Brethren teach that all our sins, past, present *and future*, are forgiven at our conversion, and therefore they maintain that Christians are wrong in praying for the pardon of sin. We ought, they admit, to confess our sins to God, but we must not pray for their forgiveness. They seem to base their whole theory on one passage—Hebrews x. 1, 2: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." Mr. Macintosh says upon this passage: "If therefore I am once 'purged,' I have no need to be purged a second time. Is the believer never to know what it is to have a perfectly purged conscience? Must he be ever asking to have his sins put away? God declares in the most absolute manner, 'Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' Should the believer, then, be perpetually asking God to forget what He says He will never remember?"—*Once Purged*, pp. 1—5.

This theory seems plausible, but it is quite opposed to Scripture.

1. The Brethren confound atonement with forgiveness, the securing of pardon with the application of it to individuals. The purchase of a gift is not equivalent to the bestowal of it. "To put away sin" is not, as the Brethren say, to forgive sin, but to atone for it. Atonement supplies the ground of forgiveness, but is not forgiveness itself.

2. Mr. W. Kelly seems to hold that all our sins were actually forgiven when Christ died. He says, "The Lord's Prayer was not intended to be the expression even of the same men when their whole standing and condition was changed, when *the work was done* and all trespasses forgiven." This is to say that those who used the Lord's Prayer were not forgiven till Christ died. It is likewise to assert that none of the Old Testament saints were forgiven, —contrary to Psalm xxxii.—and that the woman in Simon's house was not forgiven when Christ said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." But I deny that our sins were forgiven when Christ died. They were atoned for, not forgiven. (1) We were not in existence to commit sin. You cannot expunge a debt till it has been contracted. (2) If all were forgiven when Christ died, how could the individual pardoned ever have been guilty? "But we were not in existence to be atoned for." The cases are different. A father can lay up property for his unborn son, but the son cannot get it till he is born.

3. If all our sins are forgiven on our believing, as the Brethren generally teach, why did David pray for forgiveness? The apostle in Romans iv. 6—10 shows that the blessedness of the New Testament saint is exactly the same as that of the Old Testament saint, in the matter of justification. Why did Christ tell His disciples to say in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses"? It was to be a *daily* petition —not one used once for all—for it was to accompany a petition for daily bread. Why should believers ask for forgiveness every day, since it came to them in all its fulness on the day of their conversion?

4. Hebrews iv. 16: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy."—Why ask for mercy already obtained on the day of conversion? Mr. Macintosh laments the darkness of Christians who say "We are miserable sinners," and who ask Christ to "wash their guilty, sin-stricken souls." Yet Paul was not ashamed to confess he was "the chief of sinners."

5. If Christians are not to pray for forgiveness after their conversion, and unbelievers, as Brethren teach, are not to pray for forgiveness before conversion, it follows that pardon

is never to be prayed for. Is this not strange? Yet the Psalms are full of such prayers.

6. James v. 15: "Even if he have committed sin, it shall be forgiven him."—Here a believer is supposed to have committed sin after conversion, and forgiveness is said to follow its commission in the order of time.

7. The Brethren wholly misrepresent the meaning of Hebrews x. 1, 2. (1) The apostle does not here deny that the Old Testament saints had a conscience perfected; he only denies that they had this perfection *from the law*. He denies that sacrifices could make perfect. But what the law could not do, the grace of the Surety did effect for Old Testament saints. (2) Besides, the conscience of sins was not of sin as accusing before God, but of sin as a thing *yet to be expiated on the cross*, and not to be expiated by the sacrifice of beasts. (3) Brethren seem to say that Old Testament saints had no peace of conscience. Yet they had the full assurance of faith, gloried in their present grace (Psalm iv. 3), and with the same assurance of hope expected future glory. (Psalm xvii. 15, xxxii. 5, ciii. 10, 12, prove that their conscience bore witness that their sins were forgiven.) Mr. Macintosh admits that they had assurance. If, therefore, they continued the sacrifices from year to year, it was not because they were *partially* purged, and the sacrifices needed therefore to be repeated, but because the sacrifices were designed to be a shadow of good things to come.

8. 1 John i. 9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—Here the forgiveness follows the confession, and the confession is admittedly that of saints *after* conversion. How often do Brethren confess sins? How do they meet this decisive text? (1) By asserting, in the face of the passage itself, that the reference is not to forgiveness, but to the *sense* of forgiveness. Mr. Macintosh says: "The moment he truly confesses his sin before God, it is a simple matter of fact *to know* that he is perfectly forgiven." Mark the italicized words. To be forgiven is not to know we are forgiven. The one is a Divine act; the other is a feeling in our hearts. (2) They assert that the passage does not say "If we *pray for* pardon," but "If we confess our sins." Was

there ever a more miserable quibble? The Old Testament saints confessed their sins and prayed for the pardon of them, as we know by the passage (Ps. xxxii. 5) quoted by Paul to prove the identity of our position with theirs: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest me the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee." (See also Hosea v. 15—"I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face." Here the confession and the prayer are linked together.)

There is not the least foundation, then, for a theory that has banished from the Brethren's assemblies, not only prayer for pardon, but all confession of sin along with it. The Rev. F. Whitfield, speaking on an acquaintance of twelve years, says there is no confession of sin in their public prayers.

CHAPTER III.

FAITH.

THE Brethren hold the old Sandemanian doctrine, that faith is only belief of testimony. It is the belief of God's testimony concerning Christ. They hold likewise that assurance is of the essence of faith. Faith is therefore simply believing "that Christ died for me."* The two doctrines, indeed, stand together. The doctrine that faith consists in believing that we are justified has its origin in the doctrine that faith consists wholly in a belief of propositions. The Brethren regard faith as being solely conversant with propositions, and not directed to Christ Himself; and they view trust in Christ, not as faith, but as the fruit of it, in the same sense in which peace, love and

* The Brethren regard their view of faith as so axiomatic that they do not trouble themselves to defend it. At least, I can find no controversial treatise or tract on the subject in any of their catalogues. The only thing I have discovered is two little leaflets, entitled "What is faith?" and "Faith and Life," which prove the Brethren to be Sandemanians. The first tract says: "There is nothing like the simple certainty of faith. 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.' I assume that I am a person in an anxious state of soul, and wanting to get certainty of life possessed. I look at the testimony of God. There I get absolute certainty. I say, 'God is true.' This is faith. . . . It is only to believe. Faith produces all manner of fruit in us: there is wondrous power in it; but still it is only to believe,—that is all. Just as though you had been deeply in debt, and some kind friend had paid the amount, and when that was done had sent you word. The person comes and tells you that your debts are paid, and you believe it." The other tract says: "Believing on His Son—believing what God tells me of His Son—I have life. It is not true that all will be justified. It is certain that all that believe are justified from all things. How do they know it? God has spoken in His Word, and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This is the essence of faith."

obedience are fruits. But in that case, trust in Christ has nothing to do with saving the soul, any more than peace, love or obedience. It is mere belief that saves. The Brethren, in a word, make the promise, rather than the person of Christ, to be the formal object of faith, while the majority of Christians believe the promise to be the warrant and Christ the object of faith.

We have two points to consider.

I. We shall prove that faith is not mere belief of the truth, but includes also trust or reliance on Christ.

1. The verb *believe* and the noun *faith* occur upwards of fifty times in the New Testament with the preposition εις (*on* or *in*) governing the object of them, as in the passage "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ"; and in not one of these instances is that object a proposition to be believed. Again, the same words occur nineteen times construed with the conjunctive οτι (*that*), as in the passage "Believe that I came forth from God"; and in all these cases the object is a proposition either expressed or implied. Further, in the fifty cases referred to, there is nothing in the context (except in one instance) leading us necessarily to refer to any particular proposition to be believed; while, with other constructions, there is frequently allusion to some statement or testimony. For example, when Paul said to the jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," did he exhort him merely to believe that such a person existed? Brethren say—"Yes; and that he might confide in Him for salvation." Very well: but where do you get the idea of this confidence, if it is not in the word "believe"?

2. The word "faith" is of rare occurrence in the Old Testament; yet the Old Testament saints believed in the Lord just as we do. It is significant that the word "trust" is the usual one to express their faith. Does not this imply that faith includes trust?

3. Unless faith is taken to include trust or confidence, there is not a single exhortation to trust or rely on the Lord in the whole New Testament—which must seem extraordinary to any one who reflects that this trust or reliance was constantly inculcated on the Jews.

4. Faith and belief are not synonymous terms. Faith

always rests on the belief of certain facts as its foundation, while yet the belief of these facts is altogether different from the faith or confidence which is built upon them. You trust a man with your goods. Your trust rests on a belief that he is an honest and solvent man; but the belief of these facts expresses no confidence in him, but rather in those who gave you the information. We may believe a report and not act upon it. So we may believe God's testimony concerning Christ, as thousands of sinners do: yet we may not trust in Him for salvation. Thus, the belief of facts is the foundation of faith or confidence; but it is not faith itself as a whole.

5. It is said that trust follows faith, as there are two Greek words for faith and trust—proving evidently that faith is distinct from trust. But the fact that there is a word in Scripture for trust is not inconsistent with the idea that the word faith includes trust. Trust stands for a certain state of mind, *independently of its foundation.* But while trust is an essential part of the meaning of faith—for our belief in a man's testimony implies trust in his veracity—it is equally essential that this trust should be built on the promises of God.*

II. We come next to show that faith does not consist in believing that "Christ died for me." The Brethren assert that they believe this on Divine testimony. They set to their seal that God is true. The Bible tells them their debt is paid, and, therefore, faith is merely crediting the testimony of God to this effect. But—

1. A man may firmly credit the testimony of God, and yet doubt whether he is himself a believer, though he is perfectly sure that Christ will save all true believers. If he shows himself to be an unsaved person by his life, then the more entirely he credits the Divine testimony, the greater

* It is significant that in the account of faith which Paul gives in Hebrews xi. 1—"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"—faith is here regarded as more than simple belief. It is confidence or trust. O'Brien says faith is here "the confident expectation of things for which we hope, and a conviction of their existence, though they be not seen." So nearly all commentators.

reason will he have to call his own state in question. When Paul stood in doubt of the Galatians, did he mean to doubt God's testimony? or, did he not rather doubt whether they were true believers? The position of the Brethren is simply this—"I believe that I am a believer." But if this is true faith, it follows that we cannot deceive ourselves, for the more firmly a man believes that he is a believer, the stronger must his faith be. If this be so, there can be no need for the Scriptural exhortations to self-examination, or for warnings against self-deception. Paul said to the Galatians—"Let no man deceive himself." The sum of the whole matter is that the man is safest who thinks himself most safe.

2. You say you have the Divine testimony to the fact that Christ died for you, and that you ought no more to question it than you question the fact of the Deluge. Are the cases, however, exactly alike? We know by Scripture that there was a Deluge, but Scripture has nowhere told *A B* that his sins are forgiven. No man's name is inserted in Scripture as names are inserted in wills or grants. To discover, therefore, whether you are the person to whom the blessings of salvation belong, you must inquire whether your state and character correspond to those described in the promises. The invitations are offered to all, even to the chief of sinners, but they alone become interested in them who embrace them. The feast of the kingdom is not yours merely on the ground that you are invited to it.

3. Nothing but the express intention of Christ to save all men, without exception, could warrant a sinner, while a sinner, to believe that Christ died for him and will assuredly save him. If the Brethren held the doctrine of universal pardon, like Erskine of Linlathen, they could consistently enough hold their peculiar doctrine of faith. But they do not hold it. Yet they argue as if they did, as we see by an extract taken from one of the leaflets quoted before. If they tell people that their debt is paid—as they certainly do in the leaflet—they tell them, in effect, that they are saved—saved, too, before they believe, and without believing. The Brethren, in fact, require the sinner to believe a lie in order to salvation—that is, to believe he is pardoned

when he is not. He is not pardoned, for he is "condemned already." They require him to believe he is pardoned before he believes. Now, he is either pardoned or unpardoned. If he is unpardoned before he believes, his belief brings him into a new state; if he is pardoned, it is absurd to speak of him as coming into a new state. On their principle, how could God punish the unbeliever in hell for having refused to believe? He would be punished for not believing that God had pardoned him; yet he knows in hell he never was pardoned. Besides, the debt Christ paid for the sinner includes the sin of unbelief, or it does not. If it does, the debt cannot be paid and remain due at the same time. On Brethren's principles, faith is utterly impossible; for the soul would be required to accept the proposition—"I am saved"—*in order to be saved.* Yet every sinner comes to Christ as lost, and not saved. Such a faith is as unreasonable as to require a man to bring himself into existence in order to exist. Therefore, unless there is a special revelation that God has saved *A B*, he cannot have a rational belief that God has saved him, save as an inference from the gospel promise that God will save all who believe.

4. If saving faith consists in being sure of our interest in Christ, why should we be directed to give diligence to obtain as well as preserve the full assurance of hope? (Heb. vi. 11; 2 Peter i. 10.) Such advice is unnecessary to those who have this assurance already.

5. Scripture tells us to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, and supplies us with tests such as love of the Brethren, etc., by which we may settle the question to our satisfaction. (1 John v. 2, iii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; 2 Peter i. 10.) The Brethren object, however, to the whole doctrine of evidences. (1) They may object to evidences, but in reality they themselves always look for evidence of some kind. They trust in impressions, or visions, or dreams. Assurance itself will be made an evidence of saving faith. (2) Paul supposes the possibility of self-deception at Galatia. (Gal. vi. 3.) (3) Brethren say that holy duties or holy affections, even love of the Brethren, may deceive us, and be in hypocrites. But so may faith

deceive us. Are there not false faiths as well as false loves? Are there no dead faiths? May I not fancy I have the immediate peace of believing when it is a different peace? Brethren say we forsake faith when we try to ascertain by tests that we are the children of God. But these tests are Divine testimony in themselves; for the Spirit witnesses *with* (συμμαρτυρεῖ)—not *to*—our spirits, that we are the children of God. Our consciences must bear their testimony. It cannot be blank.

6. If there is no faith where there is no assurance of salvation, then spiritual life is suspended while the assurance is in abeyance. For faith is indispensable to the continued life of the soul: "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20).

It is clear, then, that the doctrine of the Brethren has no foundation in God's Word. They may continue to repeat their favourite saying that to doubt we are saved is to make God a liar; for they must know perfectly well that the doubting which Scripture condemns is not doubting our own safety, but doubting whether what God has said be true.

This doctrine of the Brethren is only calculated to discourage feeble saints and to nourish the pride of hypocrites.

I. *Faith and Repentance.*

The Brethren's view of faith as a mere belief of testimony leads them to adopt a peculiar view of repentance.* Their doctrine is that a sinner does not really repent till after he has believed. If they mean that, in the order of nature, but not of time, faith precedes repentance, I do not dispute their

* There is a little uncertainty as to their views about repentance. Some Brethren hold that it is nothing but a change of mind. But the majority, including Mr. Darby, hold that it is, in the words of Mr. F. G. Patterson, "the judgment we form of ourselves and all in ourselves under the effect of God's testimony which we have believed." Mr. Darby says of it: "Habitually, in its use in Scripture, it is the judgment I form in God's sight of my own previous conduct and sentiments consequent on the reception of God's testimony, in contrast with my previous natural course of feeling." Again: "It is not the sorrow itself. This works repentance, if it is godly sorrow, and is not regret or remorse (that is μεταμελεια, not μετανοία)—words used sometimes one for another, but not in Scripture." (Tract on *Repentance.*) Mr. Darby is

doctrine; but they separate faith from repentance, so as to lead to the supposition that they are not both necessary to forgiveness.

We hold that faith and repentance are necessarily connected with a view to forgiveness. Faith in Christ is trust in Him and His work. But for it to be genuine it is necessary we should feel our need of redemption. Bishop O'Brien well says that faith is not the act of one careless about the interests of his immortal soul, with little sense of guilt and little fear of punishment.

1. Repentance is so connected with faith, and so inseparable from it, that it stands before the blotting out of our sins. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Brethren say repentance comes after, not before, the blotting out of sins. Consult such Scriptures as--"If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." "Repent and believe the gospel." In fact, true repentance always accompanies the first actings of faith. In Isaiah lv. 6, 7, there is no idea of forgiveness and the comfort of it preceding any degree of true repentance. True repentance is a believing repentance, and true faith is a penitent faith. A general belief as to God's mercy and readiness to forgive seems essential to genuine repentance.

2. Which, then, is first—faith or repentance? It seems as absurd to ask the question as to dispute whether a garment is washed or made clean first. It in fact becomes clean in the process of washing. So, when we lay aside our unbelief, we do so in the exercise of repentance; and when we turn from sin to God in repentance, we do it by faith in Christ.

It is by faith we come to see our guilt and danger. We do not say that faith is a modification of repentance, but only that the transition from unbelief to faith takes place in

quite wrong in saying that these two Greek words are not interchangeable in Scripture. Any Greek concordance will settle this point. Girdlestone says: "The distinction between *μεταμελεια*, regret, and *μετανοια*, reconsideration, which Beza held, must not be pressed very far, because, as we have seen, these words are used in almost the same sense in LXX." (*Old Testament Synonymes*, p. 148). The Brethren seem to hold repentance to be a mere intellectual review of ourselves and our conduct.

one of those changes of thought and feeling called repentance.

II. *Faith and Prayer.*

The Brethren have a curious opinion that unconverted persons ought not to pray for salvation, but to take it without prayer. They say truly enough there can be no true prayer without faith, and they therefore infer that it is absurd to counsel a sinner to pray for salvation before he has faith.* They argue, further, that to urge the duty of prayer before believing is to ask the sinner to work out his own salvation.

All evangelical divines regard prayer as the expression to faith, and not merely as a duty flowing from it.

Let us examine this very plausible opinion of the Brethren.

1. It is the duty of an unconverted man to pray, as it is his duty to believe. His unbelief is no excuse for the neglect of this duty. (Acts viii. 21—23; Isa. lv. 6, 7; Ps. lxv. 21.) Why, otherwise, is the neglect of prayer charged as his sin? (Zeph. i. 6; Hosea vii. 7; Jer. x. 21, 25.) In fact, if a sinner ought not to pray, he is justifiable in breaking the whole law of God, and equally justifiable in neglecting salvation itself. "But does not Scripture say that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord?" Yes; and everything else that he does. "The ploughing of the wicked is sin"—is he not to plough? In fact, he should neither eat nor drink, any more than pray, for he is required to do these common acts "to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31)—which he cannot possibly do in unbelief. Thus, on Brethren's principles, no man should do any duty—obey his parents, or do justice to his neighbours—till he is a believer.

2. The Brethren say the sinner ought not to pray, but to take salvation without it. What is the difference? Is it possible to take salvation without desiring it? And is not prayer the expression of this desire? The application of the soul to Christ for salvation seems to be as essentially

* "He will see that disciples are exhorted to pray, and he will note that it is only disciples that are exhorted."—*Prayer in its Proper Place*, p. 5.

prayer, and as inseparable from it, as the motion of the lungs from the act of breathing, or that of the heart from pulsation. But if a sinner takes salvation before he prays, and does so because he has not faith to pray, he is saved before he has faith, and he is not of course justified by faith. The Brethren counsel the sinner against praying, because prayer implies faith, and yet exhort him to take salvation, which is impossible without faith. On their principles a sinner can never either believe or pray.

3. If a man ought not to pray before conversion, he ought to know, or rather be sure, of his conversion before he prays; for if he be not sure of his conversion, he cannot be sure whether he should pray or not. But, after all, how can we tell whether a man has faith to pray or not, but by his actually praying? Let every man be exhorted to pray, as he is exhorted to believe. Peter told Simon Magus, still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," to "repent of his wickedness and pray God if, perhaps, the thought of his heart might be forgiven him." Brethren say that Peter bids him to repent, and the least measure of that fits for prayer. But Peter bids him not to repent in order to prayer, but to repent and pray in order to pardon. What folly it would have been to tell the diseased who crowded to Jesus at Jerusalem of His power to heal, and then dissuade them from asking a cure till it was ascertained that they thoroughly believed all that had been told them! Surely, their asking Jesus was the proper evidence that they really did believe in Him. Did not our Lord say to the woman of Samaria,—"If thou knewest the gift of God . . . . thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water"?

4. But Brethren argue that we put the sinner in a way of working out his own salvation, if we encourage him to pray at all. It might be a sufficient answer to say that the sinner is encouraged by God Himself to call upon Him: "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon Thee" (Ps. lxxxvi. 1—7); "How shall they call on Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. x. 10—14). But is there any weight in the Brethren's objection? Did Naaman the Syrian cure his own leprosy

when he bathed in Jordan? Did the paralytic man cure himself when he took up his bed and walked? Did Lazarus raise himself from the dead, when he arose at Christ's word and came forth out of the sepulchre? Does the beggar who asks an alms work for his bread? According to Brethren, it is impossible to give the beggar a free gift, unless he lie still as a stone till we put it into his mouth or his pocket. The gift loses its freeness the moment he begins to ask for it.

CHAPTER IV.

SANCTIFICATION.

THE Brethren are generally believed to hold Perfectionist doctrine, and to deny a practical and progressive holiness in the believer. This is a mistake. They do not hold that sanctification is not in one sense progressive, or that the believer does not commit sin. But they do undoubtedly lay such a stress upon "sanctification in Christ," as "an immediate, complete, and eternal work"—just as complete as justification itself—and throw the practical work of holiness so much into the background in their treatises and tracts, that they have the appearance of sanctioning all the extravagance of the Perfectionist theology. As a writer says: "There have been certain Brethren who have enlarged upon our being sanctified in Christ, and have almost forgotten the work of the Spirit."

They hold, then, that we are perfectly sanctified, as we are perfectly justified, in Christ; that there is a sanctification of the Spirit before we are justified; and that the Spirit does not improve our old nature, which cannot be changed or mended, but implants an entirely new nature, which cannot sin. They believe also that the saint makes progress in holiness, but they do not explain how there can be progress in a being with two antagonistic natures, each of them incapable of change. They say the churches deny "sanctification in Christ," while setting poor weak saints upon the device of mending their old corrupt nature which cannot be mended.

This is the Brethren's doctrine on sanctification.*

* "It is an important truth in its own place that the progressive work of holiness proceeds after we are justified. But what is sanctifica-

I. They quote a few texts to prove that sanctification is used in Scripture, and especially in the Epistle to Hebrews, to mean consecration, separation, or setting apart; as it is undoubtedly used in reference to the priest, the altar, and all the holy things of the older dispensation. We admit as fully as they do that the word "sanctify" sometimes has this sense in the New Testament—as where Christ says, "In their behalf I sanctify myself." But we deny that this is its general signification. In all but a few passages it means personal purity. The word ἁγίασμος, sanctification, has this meaning, as Brethren themselves admit, in eight out of the ten instances in which it is used in the New Testament. But we totally dissent from the view that sanctification in the first sense is represented in Scripture as preceding justification. They quote 1 Corinthians vi. 11—"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Here, they say, the order is washing, sanctification, justification. We answer that justification is here placed last as presenting the weightiest thought, and washing first because the apostle had just been referring to Corinthian impurities. If the Brethren insist on the order, why do they say that repentance follows faith, when it is said, "Repent and believe the gospel"? They quote also 1 Peter i. 2—"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father *in* santification of

tion of the Spirit before we are justified? And why is it that theologians or preachers never say a word about this?"—W. Kelly, *True Sanctification*, p. 25.

"The word of God never once teaches us that the Holy Ghost has for His object the improvement, either gradual or otherwise, of our old nature—that nature which we inherit by natural birth from fallen Adam."—*Perfiction: Where is it?* p. 35.

"There is no cleansing of the old nature, no mending of old Adam; we have got the new nature that cannot sin; the flesh is there; but the new nature is a sinless nature."—Darby, *Notes on 1 John*, p. 49.

"Sanctification is not merely a progressive work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, but it is one result of our being linked to Christ by faith, whereby we become partakers of all that He is. This is an immediate, a complete, and an eternal work."—*Sanctification: What is it?* p. 10. [This contradicts Mr. Kelly's statement that sanctification precedes justification; for this writer makes sanctification a result of our being linked to Christ by faith.]

the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." Here, they say, we are sanctified that we might be justified. Brethren will not surely maintain that Christian obedience precedes justification; yet this is the exact order of the passage. The "sprinkling of the blood," in allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices under the law (Heb. ix. 13, 14), refers to the continued cleansing of the believer, as it is presented in 1 John i. 7: "If we walk in the light . . . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Sanctification here does not precede justification. Brethren also quote John xvii. 19—"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth"—as explanatory of the previous prayer—"Sanctify them through thy truth." It cannot mean "sanctify" in the Brethren's sense, for those for whom He prayed were already justified. It refers either to consecration to apostolic service, or to personal holiness. They quote likewise 2 Thess. ii. 13—"Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Here, they say, the order is sanctification first, and then faith as the instrument of justification. We have already seen that the order of the words establishes nothing as to the succession of the things they designate. Yet it is right to say that regeneration precedes faith, and regeneration is the beginning of the work of sanctification; but sanctification is made in Scripture to apply to the progress of a work which is not only distinct from justification, but uniformly represented as subsequent to it in Christian history.

We object, then, to anything like a revival of the old Antinomian doctrine of "Imputed Sanctification." The term is inaccurate and unscriptural. We know that the Lord Jesus is made to us "sanctification" (1 Cor. i. 30), but this sanctification is not by imputation, nor does the text say so. We might as readily prove imputed wisdom or imputed redemption from this text. The Brethren, in fact, use the word sanctification in such a manner as to make it tantamount to justification, and they accordingly lay no stress upon personal and practical holiness.

II. We shall now consider the Brethren's theory of the

new nature. Regeneration, they say, is not a change of the old nature, but the introduction of a new: nor does the introduction of the new alter the essential character of the old, which continues what it was, and is made in no respect better.

1. There is not a passage in the New Testament where regeneration is called the implanting of a new nature beside the old, or where the renewed man is represented as possessing two hostile natures. Paul does say, "I see another law"—not another nature or another man—"in my members warring against the law of my mind." He speaks of "the flesh lusting against the Spirit,"—that is, the Holy Spirit, not our spirit,—for he is not here (Gal. v. 17) showing the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh as combined during life in one Christian, but he points to these contrasted works and fruits as tests to distinguish Christians from reprobates. The apostle teaches everywhere that the renewed man is imperfect, having two principles of volition mixed in the motives of the same acts; but he does not teach that he has become two men or two natures. "But the old nature is unchanged." We ask, Is there change at all in regeneration? and what is it that is changed? Several passages are decisive upon the point. (Col. i. 21, 22; Eph. iv. 23, ii. 1, 5, 10.) Brethren reply that Scripture says the sinful man is renewed, but not that the old nature is renewed. True: because Scripture is accurate. But it does not say that the man has two natures. The fact is, depravity grows in sinners as holiness grows in saints.

2. Brethren confidently quote Ephesians iv. 22—24: "That ye put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts . . . and that ye put on the new man." Well, if this is to be literally understood, the two do not dwell together; because the old is put away, the new takes its place. They are not co-existent, but successive. The fact is, the Brethren are Realists in philosophy, giving actual entity, not to say personality, to the carnal and renewed natures.

3. Let us now ask, What does the Spirit sanctify? Not the old man, for he cannot be mended; not the new

man, for he is perfect and sinless. Brethren thus get rid of the Spirit's sanctifying work altogether. Above all, where is there room in this system for progressive holiness? The new nature is perfect: it cannot advance in holiness. The old nature is unchangeable: holiness cannot apply to it in any sense or degree.

4. The Brethren's doctrine frees the saint from all responsibility for sin committed. The new man cannot sin. They quote, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Do Brethren therefore infer that sin in a believer is not sin at all? Paul does not deny his responsibility or his personality. There were two conflicting elements in him, but one responsible self. But Brethren do not deny that they sin: which nature, then, is it that is responsible? Perhaps the old. Then, is it the old that gets the pardon, and that is washed in the blood?

5. This doctrine prepares the way for the singular absence of all confession of sin in the public worship of the Brethren. Is there not some secret or tacit denial of sin altogether, as in any sense adhering to the believer?

III. The true doctrine of Scripture is that sanctification is a progressive work. It is the Spirit's work to apply Christ's redemption, and His operation in justification and sanctification begins at one and the same moment. The moment a soul is justified, it is set apart to the Lord. The separation is continuous all through life. Holiness proceeds from stage to stage, as we naturally infer from the images of Scripture,—the vine, the plant of corn, the living body, the infant. (Heb. vi. 1; Eph. iv. 11—16; 2 Peter i. 5—10; 2 Thess. i. 3; Phil. iii. 14; 2 Cor. iii. 18, iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 23.)

CHAPTER V.

THE LAW AS A RULE OF LIFE.

THE Brethren teach that the law given on Sinai was for Jews, not for Gentiles, and that Christ's death has abrogated it totally and finally. They maintain, therefore, in the words of Mr. Darby, that "the men before Moses, the Gentiles since, and Christians now, are not under law. Christians are not under the law in any sense; for they are not under the law, but under grace." If a Christian puts himself under the law, he is under the curse; for the law cannot but curse all who are under it. The Brethren hold that the law makes no distinction between a regenerate and an unregenerate man; and they deny that Scripture sanctions the distinction made by divines between the law as a way of justification and the law as a rule of life. The only rule of life to a believer is Christ Himself.

The Brethren hold two inconsistent views on this subject. They say the law was wholly abrogated by the death of Christ: then they say the law was not abrogated, but that we are not under it. Mr. Darby says, in his Tract on *Law:* "The apostle (in 2 Cor. iii.) sets aside the dispensation of the law, referring specifically to the ten commandments, and yet mixes up the whole system with them as inseparable, as parts of one great whole, to the end of which Israel could not look, and which was abolished." The same tract says: "The law is not abrogated, but we are not under it. It is good, if a man use it lawfully; but it is not made for the righteous, but for the ungodly and profane." Which statement are we to receive? The Darbyite argument, with all the array of Scripture texts adduced to support it, is that the law is no longer in force; but all through their tracts they argue that it is still in existence to condemn unbelievers. If the law was abrogated *per se* by

Christ's death, it cannot now be in force, even to condemn unbelievers.

I. *The Brethren hold that there was no law till the Decalogue was given on Sinai.*

Brethren do not deny that there was sin in the world during this period; but it was not the transgression of law,—only lawlessness. Adam himself was not under law, either before he fell or after it. Dr. Davis says: "Responsibility and moral obligation exist independently of law. Adam had these in the garden of Eden, and in breaking them brought in sin. Sin is defined in 1 John iii. 4 (which Mr. Darby translates—'whoso commits sin commits lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness'). Sin is lawlessness, referring to a state, not an act. Transgression is the breaking of a given law. Till the law, sin (*i.e.* lawlessness) was in the world, though not transgression (Rom. v. 13)."* There are many errors here. We observe—(1) that Paul does not regard sin as merely lawlessness; for he says that "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. v. 13). Yet it was imputed, for death reigned; therefore there was a law. Sin and law are correlates of each other: to be without law is to be without sin. (2) It argues profound ignorance of moral science to say that there can be responsibility and moral obligation independently of law. What is meant by Adam's breaking responsibility and moral obligation, and thereby bringing in sin? Is it meant that a child's violation of his father's command will exempt him from responsibility and moral obligation? Is this sound philosophy? (3) But if Adam's act in Paradise brought him into a state of lawlessness—that is, into a state without law—was not that his state already? How, then, could there be any change in his state? Mr. Darby says, "A law to love God does not suit innocence." Why not? Does innocence not need to know what it ought to do? The idea of innocence implies law; for where there is no law there is no transgression. If Adam was put under no law, it is simply absurd to speak of his innocence. Let us ask,—If Adam had told a lie, even though he had not eaten the forbidden fruit, would he not

* *Helps to Inquirers.*

have sinned? It is expressly said that "God made man (*Adam*) upright" (*yashar*—Eccles. vii. 29): a word that always has relation to law.

But take the case of all who lived before Moses. Let us ask, Who were redeemed from the law's curse,—Jews or Gentiles? *Both.* Then, Gentiles, and all under the patriarchal dispensation, must have been under the curse of the law as well as Jews. Paul says expressly that *both* are under law: "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that *every mouth* may be stopped and *all the world* may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). Dr. Davis says there was no transgression in the world before Moses; but Paul says the "law was added because of transgressions,"—that is, the transgressions were already in being when the positive law appeared. It seems to be forgotten that Noah's precepts were given ages before Moses. The violation of these surely involved transgression.

II. *The Brethren teach that believers are not under the law in any sense.**

1. The Brethren always argue as if we held that life came to us by the law. Mr. Darby actually says, in reference to the law given to Israel: "It was given to have life by, but was found, from man's sinful state, to be death."† There is not the least foundation in Scripture for this opinion, any more than for the stereotyped misrepresentation of the Brethren that *we* regard the law as *giving* us life. We are saved by grace, not by law.

* "As many as are of its works - on the principle of it: its works are not bad ones—are under a curse (Gal. iii. 10). That is, law means, in the apostle's teaching, something else than a rule or measure of conduct. It is a principle of dealing with men which necessarily destroys and condemns them. This is the way the Spirit of God uses law in contrast with Christ, and never in Christian teaching puts men under it, but carefully shows how they are delivered from it, are no longer under it; nor does Scripture ever think of saying, You are not under the law in one way, but you are in another: you are, not for justification, but you are as a rule of life."—Mr. Darby on *Law.*

† Another Brother says that when the Israelites at Sinai answered to Moses, who had reported the Lord's message on the mount, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do," they virtually renounced their blessed position under the covenant of promise (*Notes on Exodus,*

2. It is argued that the law cannot but curse all who are under it, and as believers are not under curse, therefore they are not under law. We answer—(1) Scripture says that "as many as are of *the works of the law* are under the curse" (Gal. iii. 10). Who are they? The apostle places in contrast those "who are of the works of the law" and those "who are of faith"—that is, unbelievers and believers. Believers are not of "those who are" of the works of the law, though they are "under law to God" (1 Cor. ix. 20). Therefore the curse cannot reach them. (2) Brethren admit that pious Israelites, like Samuel and David, were under law; yet *they were not under curse!* How can this be, if all under the law are under curse? Were pious Israelites not bound to obey the law? If they were bound, why were they not under curse for their disobedience? This argument can only be evaded by denying that there were any believers at all among the Israelites. Will the Brethren seriously tell us how the Old Testament saints differ from the New Testament saints in their relation to law? If Old Testament saints could be under the law and yet not under curse, because they were under the promise—that is, under the covenant of grace—why should not New Testament saints, saved by grace, be under law likewise, as a rule of life, without being overtaken by the curse? What difference was there between David's sin and Peter's sin, in relation to the law? If David was bound to keep the ten commandments, including the seventh, are not New Testament saints similarly bound? Does not James settle this point when he says, "He that said Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill" (James ii. 11), and says this, too, to Christians? Why, too, should God remind His people of His great love in giving them the law (Deut. iv. 7, 8), if its only effect was to curse them? Why should He promise to write this "cursing

p. 232). They undertook, it is said, the most presumptuous vow that mortal lips could utter. How is it, then, that their answer is commended in Deuteronomy v. 28, 29, where God actually says, "The people had well said all they had spoken"! There are people wiser than God. Brethren forget that Israel knew nothing of law except in connection with promise and blessing. The grace was earlier than law even for them.

thing" in the hearts of His people (Heb. viii. 10)? (3) Paul says he is "not without law to God" (1 Cor. ix. 20). Why was *he* not under curse? He says again, "I myself serve (δουλεύω) the law of God" (Rom. vii. 25). Why, again, was he not under curse?

3. It is argued that Scripture makes no distinction between the law as a way of justification and the law as a rule of life. The distinction existed in Old Testament times, because, as we have seen, pious Israelites were under it for guidance, and yet were not cursed. We shall presently prove that it existed in New Testament times. Brethren quote in favour of their views Romans vi. 14—"Ye are not under the law, but under grace." I admit there is no reference here to the two dispensations of law and grace. (1) The passage proves nothing for the Brethren; for, whatever it means, it was as true of pious Israelites like David as of pious Christians like Paul,—they were "not under the law, but under grace," any more than Christians now—else, how could they have been saved? Will Brethren say that this passage marks the difference between Old Testament and New Testament saints? If so, then no Old Testament saint was ever either saved or sanctified. (2) If the passage implies that Christians are not under the guidance of the law, then it equally implies that they are not under any guidance at all—not even that of Scripture—for grace is not guidance, but only supplies the power to follow guidance. The law is the guide; it is grace that disposes and enables us to obey it. Brethren always confound the rule of obedience with the spring or motive that leads to it. The error is just the same as to confound the steam-power that drives the engine with the iron track along which it travels. (3) If we are not under law for guidance, then why should Roman Christians (Rom. xiii. 8), and Ephesian Christians (Eph. vi. 1—3), and Christians in general (James ii.), be referred to the law as a rule of life and conduct? (4) The passage means, "Ye are not under the law as a condition of salvation, but under a system of free grace." Thus sin cannot have dominion, for "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "To say that law here is the legal dispensation, is to say that all who

lived under the law of Moses were under the dominion of sin." (Haldane.)

4. Mr. Darby says: "No Christian supposes he is at liberty to kill or steal. That is not the question. But does he refrain from killing or stealing because it is forbidden in the law? Every true Christian, I am persuaded, will answer No, though he recognises the prohibition as quite right [in itself, but not as having relation to him]. The man who refrained from killing simply because it was forbidden in the law would be no Christian at all." (1) Mr. Darby here shirks the question of obligation altogether. If a Christian kills, does he commit no sin, in the face of James ii. 11 saying, "If thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law"? How can the prohibition have no relation to him, if he can still become a transgressor of the law? (2) Mr. Darby confounds the love to God that restrains from sin with the authority of the lawgiver that forbids it. The Old Testament saint recognised that authority to its fullest extent, yet the love of God must have operated to keep him from crime—that is, the two principles are perfectly consistent. If the principle of grace in the heart is enough, why should God have ever forbidden these crimes? Why should He repeat the prohibition against stealing in the New Testament? (3) According to Mr. Darby, a Christian who steals or kills commits no sins but those of unkindness or unthankfulness to Christ. Nay, he commits no sin at all, because there cannot be sin without law. If we are not under the law as a rule of life, we are not *bound* to love either God or man, and it is no sin to be without love to both.

5. The Brethren quote Romans vii. 1—5 in favour of their views. This is their comment upon the passage: "You cannot, the apostle insists, have two husbands at the same time. You cannot be under obligation to Christ and the law. Well, how is freedom to be obtained for the man under the law? He dies in that in which he was held. The law could only assert its claim on the man as a living child of Adam. 'The law has power over a man as long as he liveth,' but I am dead to the law by the body of Christ; the bond to the law has absolutely, wholly and necessarily ceased, for the person is dead, and the law had power over him only

as long as he lived." This is the chief text of the Brethren on this controversy. It seems at first sight very formidable. But (1) the apostle cannot be expected to contradict himself. If we are so dead to the law—that is, in a sense that puts an end to all future relation, on our part, to the law—how is it that the apostle says, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God"—an objective rule or standard? Surely, according to the Brethren's theory, the apostle is here serving two husbands at one and the same time. He says elsewhere he is "not without law to God," and, as if to explain his new attitude, he adds, "but under the law to Christ," implying that the one was not inconsistent with the other. (2) The Old Testament saints were dead to the law, just as we are, by the body of Christ. Had they two husbands, in the sense of the Brethren's theory? When they were justified, they were free from the law, just as we are, as to condemnation; but they still had relation to law as to guidance and conduct. When they were justified, they were "dead to the law," and "dead to sin," just as we are—"having their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (3) The interpretation already given of Romans vi. 14 applies to this passage likewise. We are "delivered from the law" in the same sense as we are there described as "not under law,"—that is, in the matter of justification. (4) If we are married to Christ, we are "not without law to God,"—that "we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Brethren say that these words of the apostle imply that the believer has nothing more to do with the law. Yet does not Paul say that he serves this very law with the mind (Rom. vii. 25)? "The letter" here means what it means in 2 Corinthians iii. 6,—"not of the letter but of the spirit." In themselves there is no necessary contrast between letter and spirit, for the apostle speaks of the "holy letters" (Scriptures) as making Timothy wise to salvation. But he speaks of the law taken apart from all the spiritual associations it was meant by God to be identified with. The scribes were men of the letter (γραμμα), and were so far at variance even with the teaching of the prophets. Besides, the law is really spiritual (Rom. vii. 14). In this sense, neither prophets nor apostles were

ministers of the letter. The reference, then, is not to the objective standard of obedience, which is still the same, but to the new spirit of that obedience.

6. The Brethren quote 1 Timothy i. 8, 9, in favour of their views: "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully: knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." Here, they say, Paul asserts that the law is not made for the Christian. (1) We admit that the law is not made for a righteous man: it is made with a view to unrighteous men, for "it was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19); yet righteous men among the Israelites were under it. And Jesus Christ the Righteous was Himself "made under the law" for sinners. The law was not made for Old Testament believers any more than for New Testament believers. The apostle's saying has an almost proverbial aspect, like that of Aristotle, "The law is not against the virtuous, because the virtuous are a law to themselves." (2) If the righteous have no relation to the law, they are without sin, for "where no law is, there is no transgression." (3) The law is not made for the righteous, yet the righteous are said "to serve the law of God" (Rom. vii. 25)—unlike the unrighteous, whose "carnal mind is not subject to the law of God." This implies that the spiritual mind *is* "subject to the law of God." (4) The apostle is here speaking of the relation the law bears to the lawless; and what is that? A state of condemnation. In that sense, certainly, it was not made for the righteous. The apostle is refuting the error of Judaists, who made the law necessary to salvation.

7. Brethren argue that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that we are now under the law of love, and not under the law of Moses at all. (1) They seem to forget, however, that love was always the fulfilling of the law, even in Old Testament times. Was not the sum of the ten commandments love? (Matt. xxii. 40.) Brethren argue as if love were a new thing, a Christian thing, that had come to supersede the old "fulfilling of the law." (2) Brethren quote the passage, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. xiii. 8, 9), as showing that if we have love, we have nothing to do with the law. But believers are here

exhorted to love one another *on the ground of its being a requirement of the law.* What does the passage mean? Love is the fulfilling of the law—that is, love is the principle, or moving cause of our obedience, according to John, "This is the love of God (ἵνα) in order that we may keep His commandments." But the law prescribes the mode in which this love is to be manifested. Brethren are guilty of the old fallacy of confounding the rule with the moving cause of obedience. This is to confound the railway track with the steam-power that drives the train along it. The law is the track and not the steam-power. Love does not tell me *what* to do: it gives me power to do it. (3) The principle of the Brethren destroys an objective standard altogether, for it reduces our obligation to the standard of our inclinations. "If our love be little," as A. Fuller says, "we are not bound to a great obedience. It is, say, as if a son said to a father, I will do what you ask me when I am disposed, not because you command me." (4) To talk of love as higher than law is folly, for love is the fulfilling of the law, and *nothing more.* He that loveth wholly keeps the whole law.

8. The Brethren bring a long series of charges against the law, as a wholly insufficient rule of life. Let us consider some of these charges against a law which Paul declares to be "spiritual" as well as "holy, just, and good"; the principle of which is "love out of a pure heart," and of which Christ said, "The law is my delight." It is said, "Were I to make the law my standard of action, I should fall very far short of my proper mark." But if the law require a perfect obedience, no obedience can go beyond it, for anything beyond it would be transgression. Where is there a Brother with a perfect love to God? Yet this is required by the law. The New Testament does not originate one iota of the Divine law, but borrows it professedly from the Old Testament. The principles unfolded by Christ in the New Testament lay enclosed in the precepts of the law. Christ never enjoined a greater love to God and our neighbour than did the law of Moses. Brethren seem to forget His words—"There is none other commandment greater than these." If Brethren say that He has prescribed more modes of

manifesting this love, I agree with them; but there is no instance of Christian obedience not comprehended in the precept of love. If love be the fulfilling of the law, it is preposterous to say, like the Brethren, that it cannot teach me to lay down my life for the brethren. "But the law could never teach me to love, bless, and pray for my enemies." Why not? It does not allow me to kill my enemy any more than my friend. "Was it the law that made Christ come and lay down His life for us?" The *motive* that brought Christ down was that love, which is the very fulfilling of the law; but it was the law that necessitated His suffering death. "The law is no help against sin." This is an assertion without proof. It is opposed to the experience of the vast majority of Christians. "The law cannot work grace in me." God works grace in us by the law. (Ps. cxix.) The law, without the Spirit, cannot work grace; neither can the gospel without the Spirit. "We deny altogether that the law is a transcript of the Divine character." It is a transcript of God's character, *as far as it goes.* In the Decalogue God declared as much of His will as was deemed necessary, and what He uttered was in harmony with His character. Mr. Darby admits that "the Christian should walk according to the precepts of the New Testament, and all the light he can gather from the Old Testament, even the ten commandments." That is, he regards all this as the *matter* of his obedience. A. Burgess answers this well: "To say the matter of the law bindeth, but yet not as a law, is a mere contradiction: for what is a law, but such an object held forth by the command and will of a superior? According to the Antinomian assertion, it should be true that love to God should bind us, because the matter itself is good, but not because God willeth us to love Him." Why, again, should a law be of temporary obligation, whose matter is perpetual? The law does not say "Thou shalt not kill" only till Christ comes. "But Christ is our example. Christ is the measure of that walk." If so, why then have we New Testament precepts? But an example is not a rule. An example only illustrates a rule, as in arithmetic. Besides, Christ gave us more than example. He explained for us, in the first sermon He ever

delivered, the spirituality of that law which was never to be annulled. (Matt. v. 19.) The words of Christ are as obligatory on us as His example. "But living in a risen Christ, as one who has been taken out of reach of law by death,—that is Christian life. The measure of that walk is Christ, and nothing else." This is true only of the resurrection state. If the Christian is taken out of the reach of law, he cannot be subject to death, since death is the wages of sin, and sin is the transgression of the law. "But the Lord Jesus gives us a place, not under law, but in resurrection, and finally with Himself risen." This is to confound the position which God gives us in Christ with our practical walk and position here on earth. We are risen with Christ. This is our representative life; but so long as we are here, we "serve the law of God" with the mind.

III. *We now come to consider the positive testimony to the law as a continuing rule of life to believers.*

1. The first and greatest sermon of Christ was about the law. (Matt. v.) "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Nobody questions the application of these words to the moral law. Our Lord foresaw Antinomian tendencies, for He says, "Whosoever shall annul [or abrogate—λύσῃ] one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." This implies its continued obligation IN, not outside, the kingdom of heaven—which, say the Brethren, includes the Church, and which, say we, can only be entered by the gate of regeneration. (John iii. 3.) That is, the obligation of the law continues in the very sphere of regeneration. Besides, the righteousness which Christ enjoins as so superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, was one which included the ten commandments, for He would not in the same breath tell them to keep these commandments and enjoin a higher righteousness which excluded them. Remember, He does not say, "Except your righteousness exceed that of Moses' law," but "that of the scribes and Pharisees."

2. Romans iii. 31: "Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law" (ἱστωμεν—"we give the law fixed and stable existence").

There is not a word here concerning the abolition of the law, or of its abrogation to believers. Yet, if it ceases to be binding on believers as a rule of life, faith does make it void. Brethren say, "Christ established the law by fulfilling it, and through our legal oneness with Him we are no longer called to fulfil it." We are not called to fulfil it for our justification, but notwithstanding "with the mind we are to serve the law of God." Besides, Christ's obedience to the law for us does not do away with the necessity of our obeying the law, as the evidence of our faith.

3. Romans xiii. 8, 9. The apostle here quotes five out of the six commandments of the second table, and then says, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"—not a law obsolete, but one still in force. And believers are here exhorted to love one another on the ground of its being a requirement of the moral law. Ephesians vi. 1 contains the fifth commandment. Here Paul regards the commandment as still in force, and of admitted authority to Gentiles. Now, if Paul intended to renounce all connection with the law on the part of Christians, why are so many pages of epistles written to Gentile churches occupied with it? If the apostle held, like the Brethren, that the law was not in any sense binding on Christian converts, he needed only to forbid it, as he did with circumcision. Was it not the apostles who put the law in their hands? Was it a dead letter to them? James ii. 8, 10, 11, plainly sets forth the continued obligation of the law on believers: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." No offence can attach to the breach of an obsolete law. The passage is thus addressed—"My brethren" (ii. 1). The sin of believers does not cease to be sin, though they are forgiven for Christ's sake. The "royal law" of ver. 8 is that of Moses, where the second table contains our love to our neighbour. Brethren say we are under the royal law, and the law of liberty, not under the law of Moses. James represents the royal law and the law of liberty as the same; and illustrates the latter by two passages from Moses' law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and "Thou shalt not have respect

of persons." So that the royal law remains in the gospel, which establishes and confirms it, making it a law of liberty.

4. 1 Corinthians ix. 20, 21: "To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law [the ceremonial law died with Christ, and he was therefore no longer under it; yet, in deference to Jewish feelings, he still observed some ceremonial usages of the Jews], I became to them that are without the law [Gentiles] as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ)"—*μὴ ὢν ἄνομος Θεῷ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστῷ.* There is therefore no medium between being under law to Christ and being without law. Brethren answer: "To quote 'under the law to Christ' is mere want of reference to the Greek. It is *ἔννομος Χριστῷ*, 'duly subject to Christ.'" This is no answer. (1) Brethren do not explain the first clause—"not being without law to God." He asserts here that the law of God has distinct relation to him; and the clause that follows is intended to explain the consistency of that position with his being under law to Christ. He that is without law to God is without law to Christ. (2) *ἔννομος* is correctly translated "under law," for there is an analogous phrase in Romans iii. 19: "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law" (*ἐν τῷ νομῷ*). Were not the Jews under the law? Also, Romans ii. 12: "As many as sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (same Greek). The word in the text is used in Acts xix. 39 of the riotous assembly at Ephesus—*ἐν τῇ ἐννόμῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ*—not, certainly, "a duly subject assembly," but "an assembly convened according to law." The word is no doubt milder than *ὑπὸ νόμον*, but it is antithetical with *ανομος*, which is "without law," and not, as often translated, "wicked." If Paul, then, was *ἔννομος*, he was not without relation to law.

5. 1 John iii. 4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law." Dr. Davis says: "It is in the original 'lawlessness,' referring to a state, not an act. It is *ἀνομία*, not *παράβασις νόμου*, as in Romans iv. 15." (1) How does this help the Brethren? If it be lawlessness, it is unconformity to the law. If the requirement of the law refers only to action, then there is

evil that is not embraced in the law. Are the inward passions not evil that find no outward vent? It is "by the law we have the knowledge of sin" (ἁμαρτια)—that is, both as a state and as an act. (2) Lawlessness is not being "without law," but is "disregard of law." Christ says the scribes and Pharisees were guilty of ἄνομια: were they without law? (3) John does not say here that sin is παράβασις νόμου, but James (ii. 9, 10) identifies ἁμαρτια with παράβασις. Before the law was given on Sinai, there were "transgressions," for, as we have already seen, "the law was added because of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19)—that is, the transgressions were in being when the law appeared. (4) John, then, asserts that "sin is violation of law," or "unconformity to law," according to Romans viii. 7—"The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God."

6. Galatians v. 13, 14: "By love serve one another; for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Paul here identifies the love binding on Christians with the love enjoined in the law. Mr. Darby says: "Hence, loving my neighbour as myself, I fulfil the law; not by having it, but having love wrought in me by grace, and not being under law." But the Old Testament saint, who had love in his heart, fulfilled that law in the same way as the Christian. Yet this was consistent with his being under law.*

IV. *We must now notice the tendency of Brethrenite doctrine.*

It clearly tends to immorality. Mr. Kelly says: "I am no longer, as a Christian man, having to do with the responsibility that attaches to mortal men, but am passed now into a new state, even while I am in the world." This doctrine is capable of serious misapplication. Let us hear the testimony of Brethren themselves. Mr. William H. Dorman,

* I do not consider it necessary, in discussing this question, to occupy space in proving the perpetuity of the Christian Sabbath. If the law is still in force, the Sabbath stands. The Brethren reject the Sabbath as creation-rest, but Paul says there is, notwithstanding, a "Sabbath-keeping" for Christians. Brethren observe the Lord's day. Let me ask, *Why do they* REST *on that day? We* rest on that day because we found upon the institution of the Sabbath in Paradise; but where does the New Testament prescribe *rest* on the Lord's day? Nowhere. Brethren are only consistent where they work seven days in the week.

a Darbyite for twenty-eight years, says, in reply to a statement of Mr. Macintosh, that "you cannot get on in the assembly, if you live in secret sin": "There is not an intelligent person, young or old, in the assembly, where he is minister, who is not painfully conscious that instances among *themselves* contradict the statement, and that circumstances, and not the purity of the atmosphere, brought the sin to light." Mr. Dorman says, "In an incredible number of instances besides, the evil has existed for *years*" (*High-Church Claims*, Letter v., p. 7). The Rev. Frederick Whitfield, incumbent of Kirby Ravensworth, Yorkshire, who worshipped twelve years with the Brethren, says: "I have omitted altogether touching on one point—the flagrant *immoralities* among the Plymouth Brethren. My personal knowledge, and information from those amongst them, supply me with some of the most shocking cases, so shocking that I cannot bring myself to give them publicity" (*Letter to Rev. Osmond Dobree*, p. 43). *An Address to Plymouth Brethren* (Hardwicke, 1862), by one who had been much among them, and still greatly admired them, says: "There have been gatherings . . . . in which the Brethren were not one jot better than the sectarians around them, in which there were many deplorable manifestations of unlovely dispositions, and in some instances even of immorality." Mr. Edward Dennett, in a pamphlet on *The Plymouth Brethren* (Stock, 1871), which he lately withdrew from publication after he had joined them, speaks of the gross antinomianism likely to result from the Brethren's views of the law. He says: "There are many of the godly among the Brethren who lament this practical effect of the doctrine." We shall close this chapter by a quotation from Mr. C. H. Macintosh, a leading Darbyite, upon the general moral tone of some of the Brethren's households: "They speak of separation from the world, but their houses present the most distressingly worldly appearance. They speak of the world being crucified to them and of their being crucified to the world; and yet the world is stamped on the very face of their whole establishment, and everything seems designed to minister to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (*Thou and Thy House*, p. 28).

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS.

THE Brethren hold that Jesus Christ will come a second time *secretly* to take away all His saints, living and dead, from the earth; and that He will come a third time *publicly*, along with the same saints, to judge the world. An interval of years—long enough to admit of the rise of Antichrist and all the events of his reign—will intervene between His coming *for* His saints and His coming *with* His saints. The Scriptures, they say, distinguish between "the coming of the Lord" and "the day of the Lord," which are not by any means the same: the first applying only to His secret coming for His saints, the second to His public coming with His saints to judge the world. The first coming is to be so secret that the rest of mankind will know nothing of it, or of the removal of the saints, who are thus to be spared from the tribulation of the last days. They say, further, that we are commanded to wait for His "coming," which is *the hope of the Church*, but not for His "appearing" in manifested glory; and, further, that no intervening events are now to be looked for as signs of His coming; so that Brethren are in the habit of saying, when speaking of events immediately before them, "Unless the Lord come first."

This curious doctrine of the "secret rapture" was first broached, as Dr. Tregelles says, at an Irvingite meeting, and was never heard of before. *It necessitates a third coming of Christ.* The doctrine has no support whatever in Scripture.

I. We deny that there is any distinction made in Scripture between "the coming of the Lord" and "the day of the Lord." Both refer to the same event. If this can be proved, the whole theory falls to the ground. Let us hear the

Brethren on the point: "The first act of the παρουσία, 'coming' or 'presence,' is when He descends for His saints and so comes to them; the second, when He comes to the world, which He has not done before. It is the latter which is called His ἐπιφάνεια, 'epiphany' or 'manifestation,' and which is never applied to the rapture, but always to Christ's appearing in glory with His saints, while παρουσία is sometimes used in speaking of the one, sometimes of the other, as the context, or persons addressed, or the way in which it is brought forward, determines; for He may come and be present in different ways to different persons."* (1) In reply, we ask, how can Brethren say that Scripture distinguishes between the "coming" and "the day" of the Lord, when they admit that the "coming" is sometimes applied to "the day"? It certainly does apply, in Matthew xxiv. 27, to Christ's public appearing. The word παρουσία ("coming") occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament, and never means a secret coming; yet *it is the only word for it*, according to the Brethren. It is applied to the "coming" of Titus, Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus and Paul, to the churches. (2) But, contrary to the Brethren's statement, the ἐπιφάνεια or manifestation, as well as the παρουσία, is given as the hope of the Church: "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13); "I give thee charge . . . that thou keep this commandment . . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. vi. 14). How could Timothy keep this commandment if he was removed from the earth before the "appearing"? How can the saints wait, look, or hope for His "appearing," if they have already been long with Him? They are supposed to be on earth till He appears. Paul says: "A crown of righteousness, and not to me only, but to them also likewise who love His appearing" (2 Tim. iii. 8). Should it not be "love His coming"? So far from the "coming" of the Lord being the hope of the Church, as distinguished from the "day," Scripture plainly

* "What is the Difference between the Coming (παρουσια) of Christ to receive His Saints, and His Appearing (επιφάνεια) in Glory with them?" p. 37.

connects the hope with the "day": "That we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. i. 14); "Who shall confirm you unto the end that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 8). The saints are to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter iii. 12). Here we have to do with the day. In 1 Thessalonians v. 2, "the day of the Lord is to come as a thief in the night." This might appear to be a secret coming. But the passage means that it will be only so to sinners, not to saints, who will be prepared for it. According to 2 Thessalonians i. 7, there is no rest or relief (ἄνεσις) to the saints till "the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance." Now, according to Brethren, the rest of the saints should come, ages before, with the secret rapture. The Corinthian saints were "waiting for the revelation (αποκάλυψιν) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7).

II. We proceed next to show that the idea of the secret rapture is unscriptural.

(1) It supposes that not one believer will remain on earth between the saints' rapture and the ἐπιφάνεια or manifestation; yet Timothy is to keep the commandments till that very time—which he cannot do if he is removed before it. (2) The parable of the tares refutes the idea. There will be no removal of the wheat first by a secret rapture. Brethren say the saints will be removed before Antichrist is revealed.* How can this be, if the wheat and the tares are to be removed together? They are to grow together till the harvest. If Antichrist is not revealed till then, he will never be revealed at all, for the very next act is the burning of the tares. Besides, the parable says, *before* the wheat is gathered into the barn "at the end of the age," the Lord will say to the angels, "Gather ye together *first* the tares." Here it is the wicked, not the saints, that are first gathered. The Brethren say the gathering in question is that of false professors around various centres of evil—such as Popery and

* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8, proves that the coming of Antichrist will precede the coming of Christ. Also, Psalm cx. 1, the Father says to the Son, "Sit thou at my right hand *until* I make thy enemies thy footstool." Christ will not, then, come before, but after Antichrist.

Neology—and the angels are evil angels who gather them. What an idea! It is Christ's angels who do it: "The Son of Man shall send forth *His* angels." The gathering here involves removal from the earth, for it is immediately followed by burning in fire. The Brethren, pressed with the difficulty, say the parable does not refer to this dispensation at all, but to the Millennial. But Satan will then be bound, and how can he, according to the parable, sow tares among the wheat? If the Church has been previously removed, there will be in the field tares, and tares only. Besides, Christ says "the harvest is the end of the age," and He says elsewhere that He will be with His Church till the end of the age. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) (3) The Scripture is quite silent about a secret coming of Christ. The world is, according to the Brethren, to know nothing of the sudden removal of millions of saints. We answer (*a*) Christ is to come admittedly with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God (1 Thess. iv. 16). A shout—a voice—a trump! and yet secrecy! Matthew xxiv. 31 says, likewise, "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and gather together His elect." (*b*) The angels told the apostles at Christ's ascension that He would come again "*in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven." He went in a cloud; and the Son of Man is to come in the clouds of heaven (Matt. xxiv. 30). Where is the secrecy here? (*c*) Why is 1 Corinthians xv. silent about a secret resurrection? "The trumpet shall sound"—is this secret? (*d*) His coming is to be like the lightning. (Matt. xxiv.) Is lightning invisible? Brethren say lightning refers to the rapidity of His coming. It refers to His manifestation. (*e*) Corinthian saints are waiting for the revelation of Christ—is that secret? (1 Cor. i. 7.) Yet Brethren say we are not to wait for that, but for the secret coming.

III. The Brethren's idea that there are no events at this moment intervening between us and the coming of Christ is quite untenable. Our Lord's prophecies of His coming in Matthew xxiv. and Luke xxi., in answer to the question "When shall these things be? what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age?" clearly tell us that many events will occur before His coming, that certain

signs will indicate His coming, and that then will be the end of the age. How do Brethren get rid of this testimony? By the daring expedient of saying that the whole of the two chapters do not refer to Christians at all, but are for the guidance of the Jews in the latter day. Would such a thought occur to any unprejudiced reader? Now, this Jewish remnant will either be believing or unbelieving. If believing, it is part of the Church; and if unbelieving, the words of Christ are not appropriate to it, as those He warned were saints. How strange to make the apostles, who are viewed prospectively as in the Christian dispensation—their names inscribed in the foundations of the holy city—representatives of unbelieving Jews in the latter days! "What I say unto you, I say unto all—watch" (Mark xiii. 37). The parable of the tares, moreover, has no place for a "Jewish remnant"; for after the wheat is removed there is no sowing of seed, but the next event is—"The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

IV. But why do the Brethren object to signs before the coming of the Lord? "Signs are Jewish; they are only for Jews." But Christ told the Jews they would get no more signs than that of Jonas the prophet. The signs must then be for Christians. "But are we not told to watch for our Lord's coming? How can we watch, if there are any previous events predicted or signs to be observed?" We answer, that the watching is not to be irrespective of signs.* The coming is to be as manifest as lightning, but signs will precede it: "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is nigh, even at the doors."

V. The Brethren ask, "If the saints come with Christ, does not this language imply that they must have been taken away before?" Surely not. Scripture says they are raised, changed, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, as He comes, and when He comes; and thus having met Him, they come with Him. The expression "to meet the Lord in the air" signifies to meet and come back with the

* The very command to watch occurs in the chapter (Matt. xxiv.) said to be Jewish. Why do they here take up Jewish ground? This watching is in reference to a public manifestation preceded by signs.

person met. (Acts xxviii. 15.) Jesus said, "He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." Here the elect are not represented as with Him, but are gathered out of their graves, and afterwards they are with Him.

The notion that the Church is not to be in the tribulation of the last times is quite gratuitous. Our Lord said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Did not the saints in Revelation vii. 13—15 come out of the great tribulation? Were not the days to be shortened for the elect's sake?

CHAPTER VII.

THE SAINTS AND THE JUDGMENT DAY.

WHILE all Christians hold that Jesus Christ will one day judge the whole human race, the Brethren alone believe that the saints will not be judged at all. They admit that the saints will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,—but this, they say, is not for judgment; that they will give an account of themselves to God,—but this, they say, has nothing to do with judgment; and that the saints will receive the rewards of service,—but this, again, has nothing to do with judgment.*

The first question naturally to be decided is, What is involved in the Judgment of the Great Day? The Brethren uniformly represent us as making it a process to determine whether a man shall dwell in heaven or in hell—or, in other words, that it is a question of acceptance or non-acceptance.† This is not our doctrine. We hold that the question of

* "A general judgment—a thing unknown in Scripture. . . . As to judgment, there is no such thing for the saint, understood as pronouncing on his state. He is already in glory when he stands before Christ." "For the saints no judgment at all. Christ comes to receive them to Himself, and raises them in glory to have them with Him. But they do give an account of themselves to God when in glory, and receive the reward of service, though it be grace that has wrought it on them."—*What do the Scriptures teach concerning Judgment to come?*" pp. 7, 15.

† "Could Paul or Stephen be taken out of heaven to be judged as to whether he should have a place there?" "Man would soon turn it into a question of the acceptance of the person. . . . . And when he is manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, he is before Him who Himself put them (sins) all away. Christ must deny Himself if He imputes them to him."—*Ibid.*

acceptance as to the saints is settled long before the day of judgment; and therefore we object to their statement that "the sentence of the day of judgment has passed upon his soul by faith," (a very unbiblical form of statement, by the way,) for that sentence has nothing to do with acceptance at all.

But if the sentence of the day of judgment has already passed upon the saint, we argue that it has likewise passed upon the sinner, in exactly the same sense, though with a differing result—for it is said, "He that believeth not is judged already" (John iii. 19). We ask, then, what has the sinner to do with the judgment-day, any more than the saint? If judgment has passed upon the one before the judgment-day, so that there will be no further judgment, it has also passed upon the other, so that there will be no further judgment for *him*. Wherefore, then, is there a judgment-day at all? Brethren say the wicked only are to be judged on that day. *Are they to be judged twice?*

The judgment-day in Scripture includes three things: manifestation—giving account to God—receiving the things done in the body. Is it not singular that all three, as we shall presently see, apply to the sinner and the saint? Brethren argue that these three things do not imply judgment. We hold that they do, and that saints are expressly said to be judged as well as sinners in the day of judgment. What evidence do Brethren adduce in support of their theory? They adduce John v. 24—"He that heareth my word and believeth in him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment" (κρίσιν); and v. 29—"They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment" (κρίσεως). The word here, they say, is not κατάκριμα (condemnation), but judgment; there is not a word of judgment here for the believer. How are we to explain this text in conformity with Catholic doctrine?

1. The words κρίσις and κρίνω are, we admit, used for judgment; mostly for judgment simply, without respect to the result, but in many cases for a judgment of condemnation, and sometimes for condemnation itself. The Lord,

then, says in John v. 24, 29, that the believer shall not come into the judgment of condemnation.*

2. We point to passages in which the saints are expressly said to be judged. James ii. 12—"So speak ye and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." This is addressed to saints, and the word μέλλοντες points to the judgment-day. 1 Peter i. 17—"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Brethren say the Father only judges *in this world*, and that Peter does not here refer to the judgment-day. We reply that He judges at the last day by the Son. He is called "God the Judge of all" (Heb. xii. 24); and there is "a day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16: see also Acts xvii. 31). The expression "according to every man's work" is always in Scripture connected with the day of judgment.

3. We point next to passages in which the judgment of saints and sinners is alike referred to. 2 Corinthians v. 10—"For we must all appear (φανερώθηναι—be manifested) before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, whether they have been good or evil." Some Brethren say this refers to saints only; but Mr. W. Kelly admits that it refers to both saints and sinners. Not a word is there here, they say, of judgment. It is only *manifestation.* (1) But if the saints are not judged, why should they appear *in the same place* as the wicked—at the βῆμα, the judgment-seat? What is a judgment-seat for, but for judgment? (2) We

* In three well-known passages, κρίνω means condemnation and not judgment. "Blessed is he that condemneth not himself (κρινει) in that which he alloweth" (Rom. xiv. 22). If it meant here judgment, the sentence would rather be—"Blessed is he that judgeth himself in that which he approveth." "Not" must be left out. Again, "And shall not the uncircumcision condemn (κρινεῖ) thee, who dost transgress the law?" (Rom. ii. 27.) Also Mark iii. 29—"is in danger of eternal damnation" (κρισεως). In the following passages, κρισις means judgment with a condemnatory result:—Jude 6, 9, 15; 2 Peter ii. 4, 9, iii. 7; 1 Tim. v. 24; Matt. xxiii. 33 ("the judgment of hell"). The following passages refer simply to the day of judgment:—Matt. x. 15, xi. 22, xii. 36.

are said to be manifested with a certain object—"that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or evil." But how are the things done in the body to be estimated but by judgment upon them? (3) There is more than manifestation here, for when the Lord comes "He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. iv. 5); and in that day "God shall *judge* the secrets of men" (Rom. ii. 16)—not one class of men—"by Jesus Christ." (4) If there is only manifestation and not judgment in this text, wherefore "the terror or fear of the Lord" of which the apostle speaks? (5) Is there no judgment to be pronounced upon the account (λόγον) that we give to God? Why is there a giving account at all, except for the purposes of judgment? Paul says—"Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ" (Rom. xiv. 12). The fact of our standing before the judgment-seat is given as a reason why we should not judge our brother. The argument would be absurd, if we are not judged. Brethren say —"We shall give account of ourselves to God, repass our whole life and all God's blessed ways with us, see it all as God sees it, and wonder at all the all-perfect grace which has led us onward from our birth." This is nothing but a travesty of Scripture. There is not a word here of sin or evil done. Are we merely to tell God the story of our lives? Is there not an account to be given of our deeds and our words, according to that Scripture—"But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned" (Matt. xii. 36)? Is there nothing of judgment implied in our giving account? According to the parable of the talents, is there not to be a judgment upon faithfulness and unfaithfulness? Are not all the servants called to account? How, otherwise than by judgment, can the rewards be apportioned? "My reward is with me to give to every man as his work shall be" (Rev. xx. 12). Is there not judgment upon the work here implied? Ministers

are to "give account" of their ministry as to faithfulness, lest they should do it with sorrow and not with joy. (Heb. xiii. 17.) We read of the wicked giving account to God—"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Peter iv. 4, 5). Has this account nothing to do with judgment? If not, why in the same sentence refer to God as Judge? When the unjust steward was told to give account of his stewardship (the Greek the same as in 1 Peter), was it not with a view to judgment? When the town-clerk of Ephesus feared he might be called to give account (same Greek) for the famous riot, was it not because he apprehended a judgment upon his official conduct? Is there not, then, a judgment implied in the act of the saint's giving account of himself to God? There can be no condemnation, for he is justified through Christ; but his reward will be greater or lesser according to God's judgment upon his deeds. (6) Is there no judgment implied in the idea of our "receiving the things done in the body, whether they have been good or evil"? Was it not from the "righteous Judge" that Paul expected to receive the crown of righteousness? (2 Tim. iv. 8.) Is there no judgment implied in the test of fire applied to the two classes of builders (1 Cor. iii. 12): "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"? And this refers to believers.

Another passage, asserting the judgment of all without exception, is Hebrews ix. 27—"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment," (here the death and the judgment are co-extensive,) "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Brethren assert that this passage supports their view Death and judgment, they say, are here made the lot of fallen man; but Christ comes "without sin unto salvation" for the saints. We reply—(1) Salvation and judgment are not inconsistent, for there is a judgment of acquittal as well as of condemnation. (2) Is it sinners only that die? If saints did not die, the passage would be decisive for the Brethren. But death and judgment are here declared to be inseparable.

Matthew xxv. 31—46.—We have here an account of the general judgment, in which the two classes of mankind appear under the designation of sheep and goats. Is there not judgment here? Brethren deny that the passage refers to the general judgment at all; but to the Gentiles, or nations, because it is said—"And before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The supposition is perfectly gratuitous. (1) In that case, nation is separated from nation, which is absurd; for they could not be all good in one nation and all bad in another. The word "nation" is to be used as it is in Matthew xxviii.: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them" (*αυτους*),—not the nations as nations, but the members of those nations. (2) Some say the "sheep and the goats" represent all who name the name of Christ. If so, then not a single heathen will be judged—though every man is to be judged "according to his works." Others say the sheep and the goats represent such Pagans as have shown kindness either, as some say, to the Jews, or, as others say, to missionaries. But where, in that case, shall any "righteous" be found worthy of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world?

Rev. xx. 12—15.—Here again is the general judgment. "No," say Brethren; "it is only the judgment of the wicked." Why, in that case, should it be necessary to open the book of life at all? The expression "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life" implies that some *were* found therein.

Other decisive passages are Acts xvii. 31, x. 42; 2 Timothy iv. 1; Romans ii. 12—15; Ecclesiastes iii. 17.

Brethren object that the saints cannot be judged because they are to come *with* Christ to judgment. Where is the inconsistency or the difficulty? Brethren admit the manifestation before the judgment-seat. Might we not ask, how can they be manifested, when they are to come with Christ for manifestation? It is argued, likewise, that the saints are not to be judged because they are themselves to be judges with Christ. (1 Cor. vi. 1—4: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not

that we shall judge angels?") The passage is, undoubtedly, a difficult one; but it does not say that the saints themselves shall not be judged. Bengel says the saints will themselves be first judged. Then will they be associated with Christ in judging the world. (Matt. xix. 18.) Dr. Gill, a Millenarian divine, after rejecting the idea of the saints' assessorship, says: "The apostle's meaning is, that in a little time the saints—men under a profession of Christianity, at least—should be governors in the world, and bear the offices of civil magistracy in it," as occurred a few centuries after. The judgment of evil angels he understands to mean "their ejection out of the Gentile world, out of their oracles, idols, and idol-temples, to which Christ refers, John xii. 31."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORLD.

THE Brethren hold peculiar views on the relation of the Christian to the world and to certain worldly employments. They affirm that the world is lying under the curse; that its governments are in the hands of God's enemies; and that a great part of the world's labour is for Satan. The duty of the Christian is, therefore, to take no part in civil government, in politics, in magistracy, in the military and naval services, and in the great majority of worldly callings. Medicine, agriculture, and a few of the handicraft trades, seem to be the only allowable employments in this dispensation. The views of the Brethren concerning "the doomed world" also necessitate a peculiar attitude toward philanthropy, and their doctrine of "separateness from evil" leads likewise to an unswerving opposition to all our missionary and religious societies.

I. *Worldly Employments.*

The position of Brethren is that the "world is a doomed world." But they do not make it sufficiently plain whether they mean by the world the earth or its unconverted inhabitants. Sometimes it is used in the first sense. "C. H. M.," in his *Notes on Genesis* (pp. 69, 74), says Christians ought not to improve or ameliorate the state of the earth which God has put under the curse. But, in that case, Abraham was wrong in turning its capabilities to account, and it was wrong for Solomon to censure the sluggard for allowing his fields to be "all grown over with thorns and nettles." In that case tillage is wrong; gardening is wrong; and all the counsels of the Book of Proverbs as to the best way of

turning the earth to account are inapplicable to Christians.* But, generally speaking, Brethren mean by the "doomed world" the people of the world, in the sense of John: "The whole world lieth in wickedness." They bring into play a distinction perfectly groundless, between the two dispensations. They say that this world and its benefits were the reward and object of the Mosaic dispensation, while the new dispensation debarred the enjoyment of worldly rewards, and has only the heavenly in view. Wealth, power and worldly honour might be enjoyed by Old Testament saints; but in this dispensation—"having food and raiment let us be therewith content." Christians have therefore nothing to do with the world's governments and employments, because they are pilgrims and strangers in the earth. What have pilgrims and strangers to do with it? A Brother says: "What is the Christian's position? He is a stranger and pilgrim on earth. (Heb. xi. 13—16; 1 Peter ii. 11.) Then, he has neither inclination, right nor title to political power. By profession he surrenders it. Who may take part in the government of a country? Natives only, not strangers. What has an Englishman, living in France, to do with the government of France? But he is moreover a pilgrim, and therefore has less reason still. If a stranger may not interfere in the policy of a foreign country, much less one who is not even residing in it, but merely passing through it, on his way to another land. To meddle with politics, therefore, is to put off our character as pilgrims and strangers." (*The Christian and Politics*—Broom.)

1. Who, then, are pilgrims and strangers? Brethren answer—the saints of this dispensation. It is true that Peter calls Christians by this name when he warns them as "pilgrims and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts" (but not from worldly employments). Yet, was it not the saints of the old dispensation who were first so called? Is this not strange, especially if they had their portion in this world? Was it

* It is absurd to say, as some have done, that the earth is cursed because it rejected Christ. The mountains and rivers of the earth had nothing to do with Christ's rejection. In reality, the earth was under the curse before He was crucified at all.

not of Old Testament saints that Paul spoke in Hebrews xi. 13—"These all died in faith . . . and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"? (See also Genesis xlvii. 9.) So far from seeking their portion here, Old Testament saints "desire a better country [than Canaan], that is, an heavenly." Now, what did these pilgrims and strangers do? So far from abjuring government and politics, they engaged in every interest of this sort. David calls himself a pilgrim and a stranger (Ps. xxxix. 12, 1 Chron. xxix. 15), yet he was a king. Joseph was a prime minister at a heathen court. Daniel and Nehemiah took political service under the Persian monarchy. It is clear, then, that the distinction made by the Brethren between the two dispensations has no foundation whatever. If Christians are to content themselves only with "food and raiment" in this dispensation, we are not to forget that the pious Agur asked nothing more under a former: "Give me neither poverty nor riches" (Prov. xxx. 8).

2. But we now ask whether the New Testament has specified the employments we are to follow in this dispensation? Where does it forbid Christians to be magistrates, or statesmen, or military or naval officers? If the "powers that be are ordained of God," surely a Christian can fill one of God's own appointments. The New Testament, however, expressly tells us that the saints did occupy worldly positions connected with heathen governments. Was not Erastus a chamberlain at wicked Corinth? Was he required by Paul to resign his place? Why did the saints remain "in Cæsar's household" (Phil. iv. 22)? If there was corruption anywhere, surely it was at Nero's court. Why was there no "separation from the evil"? Did all these saints serve the world? Was not Cornelius a Roman soldier? Was he required after his conversion to resign his commission? Captain Percy Hall, who resigned both rank and pay in the navy on Brethrenite principles, will find it hard to justify the position of Cornelius. Yet he says: "The fountain of authority, whence I derive mine, as holding a commission in the navy, is the 'world,' which is the enemy of God, as declared by His Son Jesus. . . . . How, then, can I retain it? How can any who say they are His retain any

authority conferred on them by the world?" Whence, then, had Cornelius and his devout soldiers their commission? From the world. And why should it be wrong to accept employment from the world as a naval officer, and yet right to accept employment from the world as land-agents, barristers, bakers', grocers' and drapers' assistants? Are they all serving godly employers? Were the Corinthian saints all serving such? "But Christians cannot serve their native country in war without serving the flesh and the world." Then Cornelius and his pious soldiers are condemned. "But it is not the gospel, but the law, to kill men." Was it under the gospel or under the law that Ananias and Sapphira were put to death? Was there anything more severe under the law? The Brethren object to a Christian becoming a magistrate, because he must in that case deal with law and not with grace. But is it not by Jesus Christ that "kings reign and princes decree justice"? If the Lord commands the magistrate to use not the sword in vain, is it not the same as if the Lord used the sword Himself? We object altogether to the principle that it is right for a heathen magistrate to make war and to execute criminals, but wrong for the Christian to do the same. How can it be wrong for a Christian to do what is not wrong in itself? On the principles of the Brethren, Queen Victoria ought to abdicate her throne; our army and navy ought to be disbanded; our jails ought to be closed; our law-courts brought to an end; and no force whatever ought to be used to punish transgressors, enforce bargains, or recover debts.

3. The Brethren justify their position by our Lord's saying "My kingdom is not of this world." Yes: but we live in two kingdoms. Christ recognised the two when He said "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." Paul was in Christ's kingdom, yet he appeals to Lysias—the representative of another kingdom—to protect him from conspiracy. Why did he not rather take wrong? Why did he appeal to Cæsar at all? He ought, on the Brethren's principles, to have cast himself on the Lord, and not upon the world. Why ask the world, with its armies and navies, to protect him? Was not God sufficient? Why did "the saints in Cæsar's household"

forget that they belonged to a kingdom not of this world? The Brethren say that a Christian ought not to entangle himself with the affairs of this world. (2 Tim. ii. 4.) What do they mean by entanglement? Ought a Christian to marry? Paul says: "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife" (1 Cor. vii. 32, 33). Is this saying stronger than the saying to Timothy? After all, everything turns upon the meaning of the entanglement; and Old Testament saints were no more allowed to entangle themselves with the affairs of this world than are those of the New Testament. The world that Christians are to guard against is plainly described by John—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16).

4. But the question now occurs, Is it possible for Christians to maintain the separateness from the world advocated in Brethren's tracts? And do Brethren themselves act upon their own principles? They think medicine, agriculture, and some of the handicraft arts legitimate. Are all these employments not in some degree implicated with the arrangements of the law? You cannot practise medicine without a degree recognised and conferred by—"the world." Whence did Dr. Cronin, Dr. Davis, Dr. Wolston, obtain their degrees? Was it not from worldly universities? "C. H. M." says, in reference to the choice of a profession for Christians, "Christ did not take any of the learned professions, but was known as a carpenter. Has this no voice for us?" Then do all Brethren follow handicraft trades? How comes it to pass, in the teeth of all their principles, that Brethren are peers, barristers, attorneys, crown prosecutors, doctors, officers in the army and navy? Why are such officers allowed to speak in their assemblies at all? Why do Brethren who own property sue and distrain for rent? Are they consistent? Are they really as separate from the world as they would have us believe?

II. *Philanthropy.*

The Brethren carry out the principle that "the world is a doomed world" consistently enough by leaving it to its fate. They think it wrong to improve the world, for they say

Christianity is "*not* to shed its blessed influence over every institution of man for ameliorating the condition of his species" (*Philanthropy*—Broom.) Thus, they hold philanthropy in contempt. They "can detect under the show of philanthropy the features of an apostacy marked as the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Korah." This is strange language for the followers of Him who went about every day doing good. Its meaning is this: Christians were quite wrong in putting an end to gladiatorial combats, in abolishing slavery and the slave-trade, in crushing suttee and infant-murder, in reforming prisons, in founding hospitals for the insane, the sick, the blind, and in mitigating the horrors of war by Red-Cross societies. "God's object," this tract says, "is not to make men comfortable in the world, but to give them power to live above it." As if an apostle did not pray for Gaius that "he might prosper and be in health"; as if godliness were not "profitable for the life that now is"; as if we were not to "do good unto *all* men"!

This tract says: "Viewed in the light of God's truth, philanthropy is minding the things of the flesh. Give it all the success to which it aspires, grant it all its usefulness, death ends all its efforts. To mind the things of the flesh is death." A strange misinterpretation of Scripture! The apostle does not mean by "things of the flesh" the body and its temporal wants; but all things *opposed* to the things of the Spirit. That is, fleshly lusts. On the Brethren's principles, if I give a sixpence to a beggar, I mind the things of the flesh, and the end of my act is death! Did Jesus mind the things of the flesh when He fed the five thousand? The tract says also: "Philanthropy may improve the discipline of prisons, but why are there prisons at all? It may multiply hospitals, but can it prevent sickness?" What absurd talk! May we not as justly ask: Christ can cure disease, but why are there diseases? Is not the one question just as sensible as the other?

We are told that philanthropists follow the standard of utility, not the will of God. This is not the case. Howard, Zachary Macaulay, Clarkson, Mrs. Fry, George Moore, Lord Shaftesbury, were no utilitarians. As Christian people

they never thought of anything but doing the will of God. Does not everything done according to the will of God conform to the standard of utility? It is an unworthy insinuation of this tract-writer to speak of philanthropists as acting thus —"for their own ends"! Did not Z. Macaulay waste his fortune in trying to suppress the slave-trade? Was not Clarkson's life often in danger as he climbed the decks of Liverpool slave-ships? Was not Howard in constant danger from the plague? Their own ends, forsooth! But something worse is yet behind: "Philanthropy, so-called, actually invades the province of God and usurps His place. It is a vain pretence of man to be wiser and better than God in meeting and dealing with evil and with the misery of man." Then the tract refers to the true φιλανθρώπια of Titus iii. 4, where God's love to man appears in the salvation of men. But surely Christ did more than save men's souls; and do not all philanthropists act on the principle that Christianity is fit to meet all the evils, physical and moral, of the world? Jesus went about every day doing good to men's bodies as well as men's souls. Is not this the very plan of Christian philanthropists, whether they work singly or collectively? The Brethren's principle is to leave the doomed world to its fate? Is this principle from above or from below?

It is a fearful travesty of Christianity for Brethren to deride the action of Christian men to mitigate the evils of the world. Consistently enough, Brethren have done nothing and are doing nothing to support the thousands of benevolent agencies that the Christian spirit of our day has brought into being

III. *Religious and Missionary Societies.*

The principle of separation from the world which the Brethren advocate leads them likewise to object to all co-operation with confessedly religious people in other sects in carrying out religious projects. The Brethren object to all missionary and Bible societies, because such societies are not "the approved modes of God's agency, however we may rejoice in their objects." They do not deny that these societies are good, for a tract on *Religious Societies* (Broom) says: "Nor can we deny that it was the Spirit of God which put the desire into the hearts of the good and holy men from

whom they originated." The Bible ought to be translated, they say, not by religious societies, but by the Church of God. Missionaries ought not to be sent to the heathen by missionary societies, but by the Church of God. (This objection cannot apply to those churches which send out their own missionaries.)

Let us ask, how do the Brethren obtain their Bibles? Do they translate and print them for themselves? Or, rather, does "the Church of God"—as they speak of themselves—do this work in its collective capacity? Or is it done by individual Darbyite publishers? Is it not a well-known fact that the Brethren for the most part get their Bibles from the Bible societies they so strenuously condemn? Why do they thus connive at the wrong done by the societies, and despise God's "approved modes of agency"? Where they have attempted to publish new translations of the Scriptures, have they not done it through the well-known publishers of the Brethren? Surely this is not church-action! It is nothing but the enterprise of individual publishers. Can this be "God's approved mode of agency"? The Brethren have a perfect machinery for publishing tracts and books—that is, for "teaching God's truth"—in the hands of publishers like Morrish and Broom. Where is there Scripture warrant for this practice? Has not the Bible Society as much right to publish the Bible, and the Religious Tract Society to publish tracts, as Messrs. Morrish and Broom have to publish Bibles and tracts for the Brethren? It appears, then, that the Brethren are doing exactly what other Christians are doing; only that they act inconsistently with their own principles. We need say nothing concerning the Missions of the Brethren. *They have no Missions.* They leave the heathen to their fate, and prefer rather to start missions for the purpose of converting Christians from other denominations.

IV. *Effects of the Brethren's doctrine concerning the world.*

The Brethren's idea of separateness from the world has wrought great moral and social mischief among them. It has had the worst possible effects upon the family religion of Brethren, as well as upon their family comfort. Miss Whately has well remarked: "The same persons who will

rebuke a fellow-Christian professing piety for worldliness in wearing a trifling ornament, or looking at a secular book, or joining in cheerful general converse, will allow their unconverted children the most entire liberty, and, indeed, in some instances, exclude them from participation in family worship or religious instruction."* But, happily, we have Brethrenite testimony on this point. "C. H. M.," one of the leaders, in a tract, *Thou and Thy House* (Morrish), has brought the gravest charges against Brethrenite family religion. He says: "According to the thoughts and actings of many parents, it would seem as though they regarded their children in the light of heathens, who had no present interest in Christ or relationship to God at all." He charges this upon "an entirely false application of the principle of grace," as well as upon the neglect of parental government. "Besides, the question arises, What are my children now? They may be going about like idle, wilful vagrants, bringing sad dishonour on the name and truth of Christ; and yet all the while I satisfy myself by saying 'I know they will be converted yet.' This will never do." What is the state of Brethrenite families? The tract says: "That there has been the most grievous failure in the management of our houses, every honest conscience must admit; but nothing can be more shameful than for a man calmly and deliberately to sit down satisfied with a disordered condition of his house, because he cannot attain to the standard which God has set before him." "The Lord, I believe, in righteous judgment, is taking up the families of brethren, to show in them the actual condition of the testimony amongst us. In many cases, it is well known, that the children of Christians are the wildest and most ungodly in the neighbourhood." "How often has one felt a pang at hearing such words as these: 'Such-a-one is a very dear, godly, devoted brother, but oh! he has the boldest and wildest children in the neighbourhood, and his house is a sad mess of misrule and confusion.'" This is true testimony! And is this all the outcome of the superior piety of the Brethren? As to the influence of Brethrenism upon the comfort of families, I shall merely

* *Plymouth Brethrenism*, p. 98. (Hatchards.)

quote a passage from Mr. James Grant, which every one who knows the Brethren intimately knows to be perfectly true: "I shall be fully borne out by the concurrent testimony of thousands of persons, all of them speaking from painful experience, when I say that no tongue can tell what an amount of domestic unhappiness has been caused by the circumstance of some leading members of a family adopting Darbyite opinions, while the other members of the family were opposed to those opinions. I might unfold specific tales of this kind which could scarce be credited; but that would not be expedient."* Mr. Grant supplies ample proof upon this point. There is no exaggeration in his remark—"It is a curious fact that a generous, open, agreeable Darbyite is very rarely to be met with. Plymouth Brethrenism changes the most kind, courteous and winning manners into the opposite." How different from the spirit of true Christianity!

* *Plymouth Brethren*, pp. 96, 97. By James Grant. (Macintosh.)

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

WE shall now briefly consider the future prospects of Brethrenism in the light of its past history, its strange doctrinal developments, and its peculiar method of operations as a sect preying upon the membership of all our churches.

Let us first, as a necessary part of our inquiry, understand the true causes of the original success of Brethrenism.

1. It owed its first success, undoubtedly, to the deep yearning that existed fifty years ago in the hearts of Christian people for a greater spirituality in the churches. There was a powerful reaction at that time against ecclesiasticism and formalism in religion, as well as a sort of revulsion from what seemed effete and powerless in the current evangelism. Those who were drawn to Plymouthism, therefore, naturally manifested a marked dislike for old ways, for everything that belonged to the usual routine and order of things, for everything long established and calm in its workings. They were very feverish in their moods. These were the people of whom Dr. Duncan remarked, in connection with their doctrine of the Church, that "they were so disgusted with the carcase, they were ready to take up with the ghost." Just as Tertullian was driven off, by the decaying supernaturalism of the Church in the early ages, to find refuge in the Phrygian fervour of Montanism, so, fifty years ago, many Christians were led by the deadness of the churches to seek rest in what turned out afterwards to be a most reactionary and unsteady pietism.

2. The aspect of Brethrenism at its start was peculiarly favourable to its progress. It offered itself as a refuge to Christians, without regard to distinctions of sect or even opinion, on the basis of the common life. The principle of union was "the love of Jesus instead of oneness of judgment in minor things, things that may consist with a true love to Jesus." Persons would have been received at the Lord's Table for occasional communion who attended the ministry of other churches. Thus, as a system of pure spiritualism, it exercised a very fascinating influence over minds of a certain cast. But it was likewise singularly happy at the start in gathering into its fold not the worst but the best members of all our churches—many of them people of rank and wealth, whose high position gave them a title to worldly esteem.* Besides, it started with a body of highly trained ministers of the gospel, who had been Fellows or graduates of Universities. These are the men who have made Brethrenism what it is, both theologically and ecclesiastically. They are, most of them, still living and actively identified with its continued progress. Brethrenism still attracts the best people in our churches. When we consider the peculiar type of piety manifested by many of these converts, we are reminded of a saying of Blake the artist, that a change of religion seldom occurs without at once deepening and darkening the religious life. We do not deny the existence of genuine piety among the Brethren, but it is seldom associated with a catholic or kindly temper toward the saints of other churches.

3. The love of novelty has, no doubt, likewise had its share in adding converts to Brethrenism. The whole aspect of Plymouth theology is like a plunge into a new element. There is hardly a single doctrine of our theology which Brethrenism has not transformed, while it defends its own conclusions by an array of Scripture texts which excites the wonder of new disciples. Its views of prophecy have an extraordinary fascination for some minds, and are often

* Mr. C. Rust says: "Unlike other sects, they originated, not with the lower nor with the middle class of society, but they can enrol among their leaders gentlemen of the learned professions, esquires, baronets, and even peers of the realm."

the first means of attracting disciples to the system. Its peculiar doctrines are taken for deep truths—though, to our mind, they are at best either mystical crudities not easily understood, or the revival of exploded heresies. We are not, of course, to forget that the convert to Brethrenism gains a new position of privilege by his change. Without importance in the Church of his fathers, he is now able to assert himself as a preacher of the gospel.

4. We incline to think that Brethrenism has owed much of its success likewise to the confident tone and attitude of its leading apostles. There is an overwhelming confidence of statement in their writings. It is this peculiarity, as we know, that is the peculiar charm of Romanism to timid and hesitating minds. But no Bellarmine or Manning was ever more decisive or unexceptive in his judgments than Mr. Darby, Mr. Kelly, or Mr. Macintosh. The bold entireness of their convictions upon every question allows no concession, no hesitation, no ambiguous expression of a half-doubt upon any point whatever. Everything is clear to the minds of Brethren, even in the difficult department of prophetic interpretation. They know precisely all the metes and bounds in this awful field of study. Thus, while their disciples are ready to reject with scorn articles of faith which have entered into the heart of the Church for generations, they show the most simple and credulous dependence upon the last Darbyite heresy of yesterday.

5. Brethrenism has, no doubt, gained rather than lost by the new ecclesiastical constitution which now governs the system. It is well known that the Open Brethren are virtually Independents in Church-government. The Exclusive Brethren have constructed something like a Presbyterian organization, which gives a sort of compactness to its scattered societies. It is true that Mr. Darby and his lieutenants are the real rulers of the system, but it has an organized framework, with something of a collective force and authority, which has greatly increased its effectiveness as a religious body. This firmer constitution perhaps accounts for the greater success of the Darbyite societies when compared with those of the Open Brethren.

Having thus considered the causes of its past success, we are now perhaps in a better position to consider *the future prospects of Brethrenism.* Several reasons incline us to believe that it is not destined to have a very long reign.

1. We might naturally draw this conclusion from the history of similar developments of religion in the past. There is something most significant in the ruin that quickly fell upon Donatism, and in the insignificance to which Sandemanism, Walkerism, and Kellyism sank soon after their rise. Andrew Fuller explains their ruin by the statement that "A system of religion which, instead of arising from a love of truth, has its origin in dislike or opposition, even though it be to error, will come to nothing." Plymouthism too obviously resembles the systems already mentioned to meet with a different fate.

2. The divisions and heresies which have rent and disordered it almost since its foundation point inevitably to the same conclusion. It is always in crisis. It contains in itself the seeds of its own disruption, by making trivial peculiarities in worship or discipline as essential to fellowship as the doctrines of salvation themselves. It brings souls into bondage to every little punctilio, and thus drives off the more ingenuous spirits. Its history is little else than a weary chronicle of dissensions and schisms. Mr. H. G. Guinness says: "The wear and tear of reality has put their ideal of a church to the test, and it has fairly gone to pieces." A Plymouthist says: "The Brethren have been more prosperous in establishing truth by their arguments than in confirming it by their practice." Mr. Dorman says: "No religious movement, perhaps, ever so thoroughly succeeded in defeating its own ends." Mr. Craik says: "Brethrenism, as such, is broken to pieces." Another says: "Anarchy, as a matter of fact, is running riot now among Brethren, and every fresh difficulty will produce some fresh confusion." If all Christendom were Plymouthist to-morrow, it would be splintered into a thousand fragments in the course of a few years. We need say nothing more of the heresies of Plymouthism. It is not, indeed, a substantive religion. It is a mere transitional phase of religious speculation. Dr. Tregelles often lamented the "Rome-ward doctrines veiled

in apparent sanctity" which were current in Brethrenism. On its ecclesiastical side it tends to Romanism, as on its doctrinal side it tends to Rationalism. Darbyism, indeed, has been called Popery to the Church as Romanism is Popery to the world. It has, as a matter of fact, given converts both to Popery and to Rationalism. Can we believe that a system so unstable is destined to endure?

3. The want of evangelistic zeal in Brethrenism seems also to justify the belief that it will not last. Other churches are recruited from the world. The Brethren let the world alone, and live upon the industry of their neighbours—finding it more convenient to plunder the Church than to gather in the outcasts from the lanes and byways. It is, therefore, quite natural that they should have no missions to the heathen, to the Jews, or to the Roman Catholics. If they appear in India or the Continent at all, they start no independent missions of their own, but settle down on other men's foundations, scattering, as Dr. Judson, the missionary, says, "our poor Protestant soldiers and half-castes as sheep without a shepherd."* They have actually in Italy driven back converts into Romanism. Andrew Fuller said of Sandemanism: "There is not a surer mark of false religion than its tendency and aim being to make proselytes to ourselves rather than converts to Christ." Would a church without missions not have been an anomaly in apostolic times? Can it be supposed that a church with no gospel for the masses will have a future?

4. The want of preaching gifts must have its influence

* Dr. Jessop, the veteran American missionary in Syria, supplies us with the latest information concerning them. The mission there has been greatly harassed by the Brethren, though their influence has much declined, mainly through their own divisions. He says: "The five men who followed the Plymouth apostle in Beirut will now neither commune with him nor with one another. The Brethren break the Sabbath openly—going to the market and doing worldly business, as they are 'not bound by the law.' One of them robbed the shop of a brother Plymouthite. The rest called him to account. He replied that he had enough to do in looking after his new nature, and had no time to manage his 'old Adam,' for whose deeds he denied all responsibility." Dr. Jessop says the churches ought to pray for Divine protection against the Plymouthite delusion."

in shortening the reign of Plymouthism. Its founders, as we have seen, were all clergymen. But these must soon give place to men less cultivated and with fewer gifts of ministry. Even as the system works at present, there is much truth in the statement of Mr. Guinness, that "the ministry of the Brethren is, to say the least of it, worthless, often nonsensical and erroneous." Are not the leaders themselves constantly lamenting that the ignorant and the high-minded, and those unable to edify, rush forward to minister—"satisfied that they have the mind of the Spirit"? Mr. R. Govett may well say to the Brethren: "To the eyes of all spectators, and to many among yourselves, the Plymouth idea of ministry has failed when reduced to practice." What else can be expected if men are true to the principle that previous preparation is sinful and dishonouring to the Spirit? The fact is, there is no originality, variety, or durability in the ministry of the Brethren. The preaching is deplorably monotonous and superficial, without intellectual vitality or freshness. Indeed, no lay movement ever did anything in the way of extending or edifying the Church. The leading evangelists of the eighteenth century, whose work has had an abiding vitality, were all clergymen, like Darby and Kelly, and, perhaps, better informed than most of the ministers of their day.

5. It is impossible to overlook the remarkably *anti-social* aspect or tendency of Brethrenism as being likely to affect its continuance. In the last chapter we have exhibited its ascetic aspect towards the world, its protest against modern philanthropy, its isolation from all sorts and degrees of Christian fellowship outside Brethrenism. Mr. James Grant says: "I know, indeed, of no sect so utterly devoid of kindness of heart. Darbyism is the most selfish religious system with which I am acquainted." It disregards all the usual courtesies of evangelical brotherhood. Its separative influence in family life has been already referred to. Miss Whately says: "We see on every side wives refusing to pray with their husbands, brothers estranged from brothers, and daughters leaving pious parents to lead a life apart, close and happy ties of affection and friendship severed. I never knew a family that Plymouthism entered that it did

not wreck its happiness." What sort of a religion is that which does nothing but disorganize family life? Can we believe that, at a period of growing catholicity and kindliness in all the relations of Christians with each other, this anti-social temper, so unlike the spirit of Christ, will not create a repellency round Brethrenism that will ultimately lead to its downfall?

These are our reasons for believing that Brethrenism is not destined to become one of the great permanent forces of ecclesiastical history. The question may be reasonably asked, in connection with this subject, whether the Church can do anything to hasten its downfall? Briefly, then, we observe—(1) That the churches ought to look to their own soundness and piety. As epidemics tell worst on weakened constitutions, so the power to repel attacks of error will be just in proportion to the soundness and life of our churches. Wherever Ritualism or Ecclesiasticism becomes rampant, there will be an apology for Plymouthism. At least, the conditions of its growth are already in existence. We cannot rest in a traditional orthodoxy. We must pray the Lord not only for the dew, but for "floods upon the dry ground." We must pray for love to abound in knowledge and judgment, so that we may have Christian fervour without bigotry, and intensity of religious action without fanatical exaggeration. (2) Our Christianity ought to be of a theological type, so as more successfully to resist the inroads of Brethrenism. There must be the preaching of a full gospel. There must be greater evangelistic zeal. There must be an individual dealing with souls in the matter of salvation. (3) There must be great wisdom in dealing with those who have been temporarily seduced by Plymouthist teaching. Truth must be wisely vindicated against errorists. My experience leads me to believe, with Archbishop Whately, that a directly controversial policy has much the effect of a fire-engine on a burning house. Some of the water will fall where it is not wanted on the solid stone wall, while that which falls on the blazing beams and rafters may be cast off in hissing steam; but what is poured on the wood just beginning to kindle may possibly stop the burning and prevent the adjoining rafters from catching the fire.

It ought to be the prayer of all the churches that the Lord would guard His people against the seductions of a system which, if it obtained general currency, would reproduce in these latter days those disastrous strifes and wanderings which divided the primitive ages of the Church.

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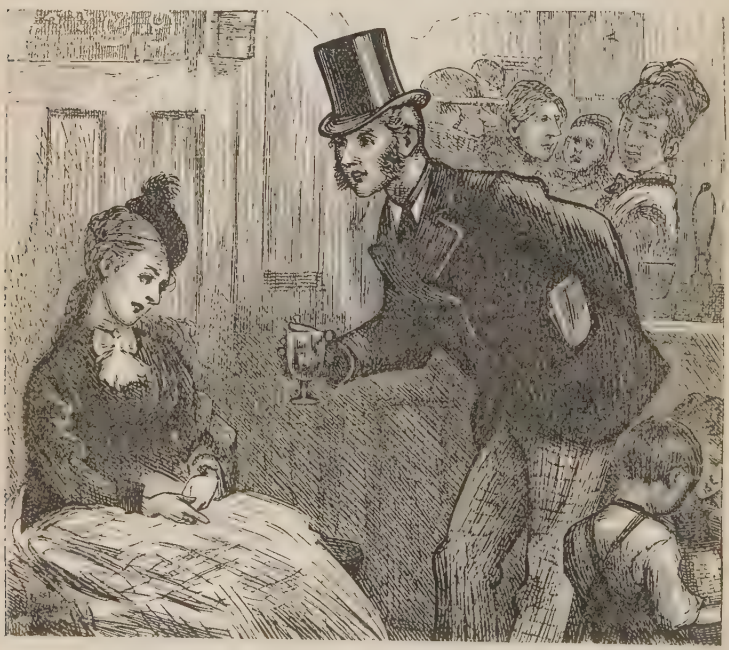

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